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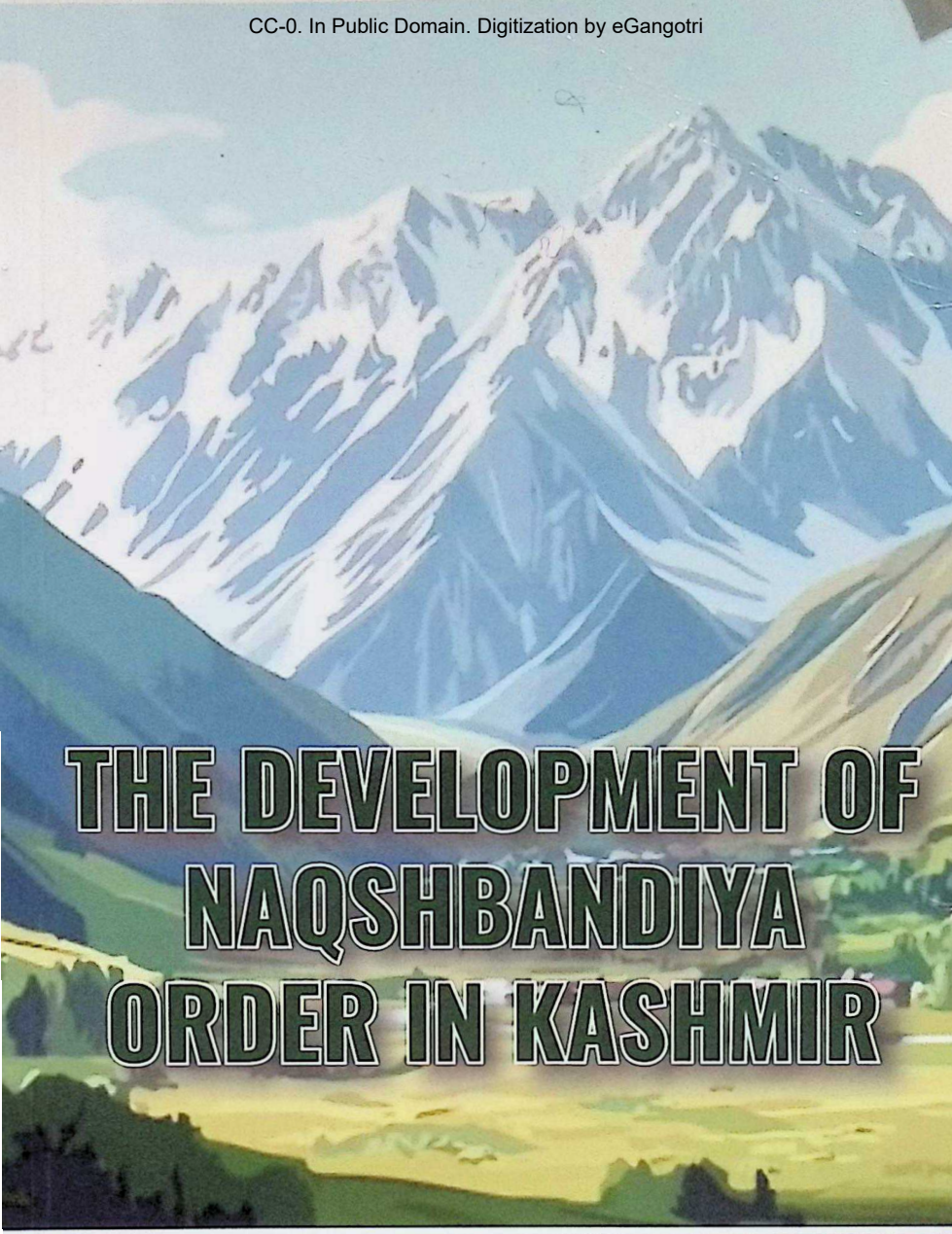

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NAQSHBANDIYA ORDER IN KASHMIR

Muhammad Hayat Amir Hussaini

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The Development of Naqshbandiya Order in Kashmir

Muhammad Hayat Amir Husaini

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Contents

1.	Acknowledgement	5
2.	About the Book	6
3.	Message by Mawlana Obaidullah Khan Aazmi	11
4.	Message by the Management Committee	16
5.	Introduction	20
6.	Naqshbandiya Order	28
7.	The Genealogical Tree of Hazrat Khwaja Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (RA)	55
8.	The Naqshbandiya Tree of Order	58
9.	The Naqshbandiya Order in Kashmir	60
10.	Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA)	65
11.	Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Younis Naqshbandi (RA)	77
12.	Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob Naqshbandi (RA)	80
13.	Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Maqbool Naqshbandi (MZ)	85
14.	The Sufi Path	93
15.	Bibliography	120

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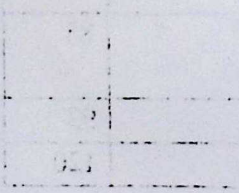

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Acknowledgement

This short treatise comprises of the development of Naqshbandia order in Kashmir and is an attempt to appraise the philosophico-religious thought of Hazrat Ibn Arabi (RA) and Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA) for their deep influence on the Sufi thought.

It is my foremost duty to acknowledge my deep debt of gratitude to Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Maqbool Naqshbandi, the present sajjada nashin of the Darbar-e-Aaliya Younsia, whose erudition, kind support and patronage has been a constant source of strength to me.

I extend my thanks to Dr. Tawseef Ahmad Parray, Pirzada Shahzad Maqbool Naqshbandi, Pirzada Jafar Maqbool Naqshbandi, Prof. Wali Muhammad Kakroo, Haroon Rashid Zargar, and Muzafar Mir for their helpful suggestions.

I remember my beloved parents with the prayer:

"My Lord bestow on them Thy mercy even as they cherished me in childhood."

(Al-Quran 17:24)

— H A Husaini

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About The Book

The spiritual history of Kashmir cannot be understood without appreciating the subtle yet transformative role of Sufism (*Tasawwuf*) in shaping its religious consciousness, intellectual temperament, and ethical imagination. Among the various mystical traditions that entered the Valley over the centuries, the Naqshbandiya order occupies a distinctive position for its synthesis of inward spirituality, social reform, intellectual sobriety, and fidelity to the Shari'ah. The present volume, *The Development of the Naqshbandiya Order in Kashmir*, is therefore not merely a regional historical study; it is an inquiry into one of the most influential currents of Islamic spirituality in South Asia.

The history of Kashmir has often been narrated through the prism of political dynasties, courtly rivalries, and shifting sovereignties. Yet beneath these visible structures there flowed another history, quieter, deeper, and more enduring, the history of spiritual lineages that moulded the moral and intellectual character of society. The Naqshbandiya silsilah, with its emphasis on silent *dhikr*, spiritual vigilance, reformative zeal, and engagement with society, emerged as one of the most significant forces in this hidden history. Its influence extended beyond khanqahs and circles of discipleship into education, ethics, jurisprudence, literature, and the very texture of Kashmiri Muslim identity.

Unlike certain mystical traditions that cultivated withdrawal from society, the Naqshbandi masters generally sought a harmony between contemplation and social responsibility. Rooted in the Central Asian spiritual legacy of Hazrat Baha'-al-Din Naqshband (RA) and intellectually enriched by figures such as Hazrat Shaykh

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Ahmad Sirhindi (RA), the order developed a reformist ethos that profoundly shaped Islamic thought across the Persianate world. In Kashmir, this influence acquired a unique cultural expression. The Valley, already receptive to mystical spirituality through earlier Sufi traditions, became fertile ground for the Naqshbandiya message of disciplined inwardness combined with social engagement.

This book, while discussing the broader development of the Naqshbandi order in Kashmir in general, pays particular attention to the historic evolution, spiritual legacy, and socio-religious role of Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya, one of the important centres of the Naqshbandiya tradition in the Valley. The work carefully highlights how this spiritual institution contributed not only to the preservation of Sufi teachings and devotional practices, but also to the moral guidance, educational upliftment, and spiritual refinement of the wider community. Through its khanqahi traditions, scholarly engagements, and emphasis on ethical discipline, the Darbaar emerged as a living embodiment of the Naqshbandiya ethos in Kashmir.What renders this study especially meaningful is that it is, in many ways, the fruit of the prayers, spiritual encouragement, and benevolent guidance of Khadim-e-Millat, Pir-e-Tariqat, Hazrat Pir Mian Baji Muhammad Maqbool-ur-Rahman Naqshbandi (MZ), the present Sajjada Nasheen of Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya Awoora Zarhama. His lifelong dedication to the preservation of spiritual heritage, dissemination of Islamic teachings, and service to humanity continues to inspire students, devotees, and seekers alike.

The preparation of this volume may rightly be regarded as one of the intellectual and spiritual outcomes of his vision, prayers, and patronage. In acknowledging this reality, one also

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acknowledges the enduring importance of living spiritual traditions in sustaining historical memory and religious scholarship.

What renders the Naqshbandi presence in Kashmir particularly significant is the manner in which it mediated between tradition and renewal. The order did not merely transplant doctrines from Central Asia or Mughal India; rather, it adapted itself to the intellectual and cultural environment of Kashmir while preserving its essential spiritual principles. Through scholars, saints, jurists, and spiritual guides, the Naqshbandiyyah contributed to the dissemination of Islamic learning, the cultivation of ethical refinement, and the strengthening of communal cohesion. The khanqah thus became not only a space of devotion but also a centre of intellectual formation and moral discipline.

This book deserves appreciation for attempting to trace that long and complex trajectory with scholarly seriousness. The study of Sufi orders often suffers either from romantic idealisation or reductionist sociological readings. The merit of this work lies in its effort to approach the Naqshbandiya tradition historically while remaining attentive to its spiritual and intellectual dimensions. By situating the development of the order within the broader socio-political and religious context of Kashmir, the author enables the reader to perceive Sufism not as an isolated mystical phenomenon but as a dynamic force interacting continuously with society, power, culture, and religious life.

Equally commendable is the attention given to personalities whose contributions sustained the Naqshbandiya legacy in Kashmir across generations. Spiritual traditions survive not through abstract doctrines alone, but through living exemplars whose character embodies the ideals they teach. The saints and scholars associated with this order carried forward a tradition of

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remembrance, discipline, humility, and service that left an indelible imprint upon Kashmiri society. Their influence may still be discerned in the religious sensibilities, devotional practices, and moral vocabulary of the region.

In an age marked by spiritual restlessness and historical amnesia, studies such as this acquire renewed relevance. Modern discourse frequently oscillates between superficial secular readings of religion and emotional invocations detached from historical understanding.

A careful study of the Naqshbandiya tradition reminds us that Islamic spirituality has historically combined inner purification with intellectual depth, ethical responsibility, and social consciousness. It also reminds us that the spiritual heritage of Kashmir constitutes an essential part of the wider civilisational history of Islam in South Asia.

The value of this work therefore extends beyond academic inquiry. It contributes to the preservation of a spiritual memory that is increasingly vulnerable to neglect. By documenting the growth, transmission, and influence of the Naqshbandiya order in Kashmir and by particularly illuminating the contribution of Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya, the author performs an important service not only to scholarship but also to the cultural and religious heritage of the region.

I hope that this book will receive the attention it deserves from historians, scholars of Sufism, students of Islamic thought, and all those interested in the spiritual history

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of Kashmir. It stands as a meaningful contribution to the growing body of literature on Indo-Islamic intellectual and mystical traditions and invites further research into the many unexplored dimensions of Kashmiri Sufism.

May this endeavour inspire deeper engagement with the rich spiritual legacy of Kashmir and encourage future scholarship grounded in both intellectual rigour and reverence for truth.

Dr. Haroon Rashid Zargar
(Department of Islamic Studies, Aligarh Muslim University)

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Message by Mawlana Obaidullah Khan Aazmi

Bismilla-al-Raḥman-al-Raḥim

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, whose guidance illuminates hearts and whose remembrance grants tranquility to souls. Peace and blessings be upon the Seal of the Prophets, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, whose life remains the eternal model of spiritual excellence, moral refinement, wisdom, and service to humanity.The history of Islam in Kashmir is not merely a chronicle of political events or social transformations; rather, it is a profound narrative of faith, spirituality, scholarship, and moral cultivation. The Valley of Kashmir has, for centuries, been graced by the presence of saints, scholars, reformers, and spiritual luminaries whose teachings and exemplary conduct shaped the religious and cultural consciousness of the people. Through their efforts, a civilization rooted in devotion, compassion, knowledge, and ethical discipline flourished in this blessed land.

Among the various spiritual traditions that enriched the Islamic heritage of Kashmir, the Naqshbandi Order occupies a uniquely distinguished and influential position. Renowned throughout the Muslim world for its firm adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah, emphasis on inner purification, silent remembrance of Allah, moral rectitude, and social responsibility, the Naqshbandiyyah established a balanced synthesis between spirituality and active engagement with society. Its illustrious masters demonstrated that true tasawwuf is inseparable from knowledge, righteous conduct, humility, and service to humanity.

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The influence of the Naqshbandi Silsilah in Kashmir extends far beyond the walls of khanqahs and centres of spiritual retreat. It profoundly shaped religious consciousness, inspired intellectual pursuits, nurtured generations of scholars and seekers, and contributed significantly to the moral and spiritual fabric of Kashmiri society. Even today, the legacy of the Naqshbandi saints continues to resonate in the hearts of the people, reminding them of the timeless values of sincerity, devotion, humility, compassion, and remembrance of Allah.

It is therefore deeply heartening to witness serious scholarly attention being devoted to documenting and analysing this invaluable spiritual heritage. The present volume, *The Development of the Naqshbandi Order in Kashmir*, represents a highly commendable and timely contribution to the study of Islamic spirituality and Sufi traditions in the region.

The book not only traces the emergence, development, and influence of the Naqshbandi Order in Kashmir in a broader historical context, but also offers a detailed and insightful account of the historical evolution, spiritual legacy, and socio-religious contributions of Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya, one of the most respected and influential spiritual institutions associated with the Naqshbandi tradition in Kashmir. Through its longstanding commitment to the dissemination of Islamic teachings, spiritual guidance, ethical reform, and service to humanity, Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya has occupied a place of immense reverence in the religious life of the people. The Darbaar has served not only as a centre of remembrance and spiritual instruction, but also as

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a beacon of learning, moral refinement, communal harmony, and social responsibility. The services rendered by the saints and custodians of this noble institution deserve recognition, preservation, and scholarly appreciation, for they have played a significant role in safeguarding the continuity of a spiritual tradition that links present generations with the rich legacy of Islamic scholarship and Sufism.

In an age increasingly dominated by materialism and spiritual restlessness, institutions such as Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia continue to provide guidance, stability, and inspiration to countless individuals seeking moral and spiritual direction. Their contribution reminds us that the true mission of the Awliya Allah has always been the purification of hearts, reform of society, and strengthening of humanity's connection with the Divine.

I am particularly pleased to note that this scholarly endeavour has emerged under the spiritual patronage, benevolent guidance, and prayers of Khadim-e-Millat, Pir-e-Tariqat, Hazrat Pir Mian Baji Muhammad Maqbool-ur-Rahman Naqshbandi (M.Z.), the esteemed present Sajjada Nasheen of Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya. His lifelong dedication to the preservation of Islamic spirituality, promotion of religious education, cultivation of moral values, and service to society has earned him immense respect and affection among scholars, devotees, and the wider community.

Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to state that this work is among the intellectual and spiritual fruits of his vision, encouragement, and sincere concern for preserving the heritage

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of the Naqshbandi Order in Kashmir. Efforts such as these reflect his commitment to ensuring that the teachings, history, and contributions of the Naqshbandi tradition are not confined merely to oral memory, but are also preserved through serious academic research and documentation for the benefit of future generations.

In the contemporary world, where misconceptions regarding religion and spirituality frequently abound, scholarly works of this nature acquire even greater significance. They help present an authentic understanding of Islamic spirituality, highlight the constructive role of Sufi institutions in society, and demonstrate the profound relationship between faith, knowledge, ethics, and social harmony. They also remind us that the legacy of the Awliya Allah lies not only in devotional practices but equally in their efforts to educate communities, reform society, nurture compassion, and strengthen the bonds of human brotherhood.

The preservation of spiritual history is, in reality, the preservation of collective memory and civilizational identity. A community that remains connected to its spiritual heritage possesses a stronger sense of continuity, moral direction, and cultural confidence. This book, therefore, serves not merely as an academic study, but as a valuable contribution to the safeguarding of Kashmir's rich Islamic and spiritual legacy.

I warmly congratulate the author for undertaking this important and meaningful task and for presenting a work that combines historical inquiry with deep reverence for the spiritual traditions of the region. I sincerely hope that this book will be

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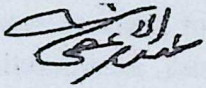
widely read and appreciated by scholars, students, researchers, and all those interested in the intellectual, spiritual, and cultural history of Kashmir. It undoubtedly deserves a distinguished place among the significant studies of Islamic mysticism and Sufi heritage in South Asia.

May Allah Almighty accept this humble effort, make it beneficial for all who read it, and grant abundant reward to everyone associated with this noble endeavour. I also pray for the continued prosperity of Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya and for the health, well-being, and continued guidance of its esteemed Sajjada Nasheen, Hazrat Pir Mian Baji Muhammad Maqbool-ur-Rahman Naqshbandi (M.Z.).

May Allah enable us all to benefit from the wisdom, spirituality, and noble example of our pious predecessors and preserve the luminous tradition of faith, knowledge, moral excellence, and spiritual enlightenment for generations to come.

Wa Ma Tawfiqi Illa Billah.



Maulana Obaidullah Khan Azmi
Former Member of Parliamen (Rajya Sabha)
Vice President, All India Muslim Personal Law Board

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Message from the Management Committee, *Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya*

Bismillah-al-Raḥman-al-Raḥim

All praise is due to Allah Almighty, the Lord of the Worlds, who illuminated hearts through faith, knowledge, and spirituality, and who blessed humanity through the noble teachings of His beloved Messenger, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Peace and blessings be upon him, his family, companions, and all those who continue the path of sincerity, righteousness, and spiritual excellence.

Kashmir has historically remained a land deeply enriched by spirituality, learning, and the enduring legacy of the Awliya Allah. The spread and consolidation of Islam in the Valley owe much to the efforts of saints, scholars, and spiritual reformers who transformed society through wisdom, compassion, moral discipline, and devotion to Allah Almighty. Their khanqahs and centres of guidance served not merely as places of worship, but also as institutions of learning, ethical refinement, social harmony, and spiritual awakening. Among the various Sufi traditions that flourished in Kashmir, the Naqshbandi Order occupies a uniquely distinguished and influential position. Renowned for its adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah, emphasis on inner purification, silent remembrance of Allah, moral rectitude, and active engagement with society, the Naqshbandiyyah has played a pivotal role in shaping the religious, moral, and

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intellectual consciousness of the people of Kashmir. The teachings and contributions of the Naqshbandi saints continue to inspire generations with the timeless values of sincerity, humility, discipline, service to humanity, and devotion to Allah.

It is therefore a matter of immense satisfaction and gratitude that a serious scholarly effort has been undertaken in the form of this important work, The Development of the Naqshbandi Order in Kashmir. This valuable study highlights the historical evolution, spiritual contributions, and socio-religious role of the Naqshbandi Order in Kashmir with scholarly depth and sincerity. At the same time, the book gives particular attention to the history, services, and spiritual legacy of Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya, which has remained one of the prominent centres of spiritual guidance, religious learning, and social reform in the region.

For generations, Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya has worked tirelessly for the dissemination of Islamic teachings, promotion of spiritual awareness, moral upliftment, and service to humanity. The institution has continuously sought to preserve the teachings and traditions of our righteous predecessors while responding to the spiritual and social needs of the community. Through its religious gatherings, educational activities, spiritual guidance, and humanitarian concerns, the Darbaar has served as a source of inspiration and guidance for countless individuals.

We are particularly pleased to note that this scholarly endeavour has emerged under the spiritual patronage,

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guidance, and prayers of Khadim-e-Millat, Pir-e-Tariqat, Hazrat Mian Baji Muhammad Maqbool-ur-Rahman Naqshbandi (M.Z.), the esteemed present Sajjada Nasheen of Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya. His lifelong dedication to preserving the spiritual heritage of the Naqshbandi Silsilah, promoting religious education, cultivating moral values, and serving society has earned him immense respect and admiration among scholars, devotees, and the wider community.

Indeed, this work may rightly be regarded as one of the intellectual and spiritual fruits of his vision, encouragement, and sincere concern for preserving the historical and spiritual legacy of the Naqshbandi Order in Kashmir. Such scholarly efforts reflect a deep commitment towards ensuring that the teachings, services, and contributions of the Naqshbandi saints are preserved not merely through oral traditions, but also through serious academic research and documentation for future generations.

In the contemporary age, where materialism and spiritual confusion increasingly dominate human life, works such as this possess immense significance and relevance. They remind us of the enduring role played by the Awliya Allah in nurturing faith, reforming society, promoting compassion, and strengthening humanity's relationship with the Divine. They also help younger generations reconnect with their intellectual, spiritual, and cultural heritage.The preservation of spiritual history is, in reality, the preservation of identity, memory, and moral continuity. A society that remains connected to its

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spiritual roots possesses greater strength, wisdom, and stability in facing the challenges of changing times. This book therefore stands not merely as an academic contribution, but as a valuable service towards safeguarding the rich Islamic and spiritual heritage of Kashmir.

The Management Committee of Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya extends heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to the author for undertaking this important and meaningful work with dedication and scholarly sincerity. We pray that Allah Almighty accepts this humble effort, makes it beneficial for scholars, students, researchers, and seekers of spiritual knowledge, and grants it a distinguished place among the important studies related to the Sufi heritage of Kashmir and the Naqshbandi tradition.

May Allah Almighty preserve our spiritual institutions, bless their custodians, scholars, devotees, and well-wishers, and enable us all to benefit from the wisdom, spirituality, and noble example of our pious predecessors.

Wa Ma Tawfiqi Illa Billah.

Hazrat Pir Mian Naseer Ahmad Naqshbandi
President, *Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya*

Advocate Showkat Hussain Naqshbandi
Chairman, *Darbaar-e-Aaliya Younsia Naqshbandiya*

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Introduction

Tasawwuf (Sufism) cannot be adequately reduced to merely the spiritual dimension of Islam; rather, it may be more accurately conceptualized as the animating spirit that integrates the ethical, psychological, and metaphysical foundations of the Islamic tradition. At its core, it constitutes an ethico-psychological system grounded in the central doctrine of Islam, *al-Tawḥid* (the absolute unity of God). This doctrine affirms the necessary existence (*wajib al-wujud*) of an absolutely one, transcendent Creator who is the ultimate source, sustainer, and sovereign of all existence. Divine unity is conceived as infinite and beyond the apprehension of human perception, thereby situating human knowledge within a framework of epistemic humility and moral responsibility.

Within this ontological and theological framework, the Prophet, the divinely chosen messenger and the vicegerent (*khalifa*) of God on earth, functions as the primary guide for humanity. Through revealed and infallible teachings, the Prophet ﷺ articulates a comprehensive moral and existential orientation, wherein human life is teleologically directed toward accountability in the hereafter. The doctrine of life after death underscores the ethical consequences of human action, positing eternal reward or punishment contingent upon one's adherence to Prophetic guidance.

The primary objective of *Tasawwuf* is the moral and spiritual transformation of the individual. It seeks to illuminate the human existence, purify the heart, reform conduct, and

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ultimately realign human life in accordance with divine will. In this sense, it represents a process of existential reconfiguration, an effort to restore the human being from a state of moral and spiritual disorder to one of harmony with his metaphysical origin. This transformative process entails the purification (*tazkiya*) of the self and the cultivation of an active, dynamic, and ethically grounded spiritual psychology.

Etymologically, the term *Tasawwuf* has been subject to various interpretations. While some associate it with *ṣuf* (wool), referencing the coarse woolen garments worn by early ascetics, others link it to *Ahl al-Ṣuffa* (the abstinents who lived in the terrace of the (*Masjid-e*-Nabwi), *ṣafa* (purity), *ṣaff* (the first rank), or even *sophia* (wisdom). Classical lexicographers, however, often dismiss these derivations on linguistic grounds, emphasizing instead the conceptual and functional dimensions of the term as embodied in lived spiritual practice.

A central feature of *Tasawwuf* is the internalization of religious life. It prioritizes the purification of the inner self, variously described as the heart (*qalb*), soul (*nafs*), or spirit (*ruḥ*), while maintaining full adherence to the external framework of Islamic law (*shari'a*). Contrary to misconceptions, it does not advocate the abandonment of worldly engagement or legal obligations. Indeed, Islam explicitly rejects monasticism (*rahbaniyya*), instead promoting an active, socially embedded life characterized by moral integrity, creativity, and spiritual vitality, ultimately leading to success (*sa'ada*).

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As an ethical system, *Tasawwuf* reconstructs human psychology by critically examining both mental and physical actions, identifying the underlying causes of moral dysfunction, and facilitating their transformation. It prepares the individual for total submission to God and for the fulfillment of his role as God's vicegerent on earth. Methodologically, this system bears a striking resemblance to medical science. The spiritual guide (*murshid* or *shaykh*) functions analogously to a physician, diagnosing the moral and psychological ailments of the seeker (*salik*) and prescribing appropriate therapeutic practices (*a'mal*).

This spiritual psychology operates across three interrelated dimensions: the individual (personal purification), the collective (social and communal ethics), and the universal (cosmic and metaphysical integration). Although *Tasawwuf* represents a unified system, its methodologies are diverse and adaptive.

There is no singular path to spiritual healing; rather, each seeker is treated according to his unique psychological disposition, physical condition, and moral needs. The guide carefully assesses these variables and prescribes individualized disciplines, recognizing that uniformity in treatment would be both ineffective and counterproductive.

Human moral disorders manifest in varied forms, anger, envy, greed, hypocrisy, lust, and other vices, often in complex combinations. Consequently, each individual requires a distinct therapeutic approach. While the modes of treatment differ, the underlying objective remains constant: the

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rectification of moral illness and the attainment of spiritual health.

Historically, the dissemination of *Tasawwuf* was closely linked to the Prophetic mission. Various Sufi masters were either directly guided by the Prophet or trained by subsequent spiritual authorities (*shayukhs*), and were then entrusted with the task of guiding diverse communities. These individuals embodied the ethical and Spiritual ideals of the Qur'an and the Prophetic *Sunnah*, demonstrating exemplary moral character, intellectual rigor, and psychological insight. Given the complexity of this mission, it necessitated individuals of profound competence across spiritual, academic, and ethical domains.

Furthermore, human behavior is deeply influenced by environmental, cultural, and geographical contexts. The psychological dispositions of people inhabiting deserts, mountains, coastal regions, or plains differ significantly, as do their social norms and responses to ethical challenges. Accordingly, effective spiritual guidance requires contextual sensitivity and adaptability. The Sufi guide must therefore possess not only doctrinal knowledge but also an acute understanding of human diversity, enabling him to tailor his approach to the specific needs of each individual and community.

Tasawwuf emerges as a comprehensive ethico-psychological system that integrates theology, morality, and human psychology into a coherent framework aimed at the holistic transformation of the individual and society.

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The emergence and consolidation of an Islamic social order in Kashmir may be understood as a historically dynamic, intellectually creative, and spiritually transformative process, largely shaped by the missionary and reformative endeavors of eminent Sufi figures such as Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA) (a genius visionary and a Suhrawardiya-Kubrawiya saint), Sheikh Noor-ud-din Noorani (RA), widely revered as *Shaikh al-'Alam* and *Alamdar-i-Kashmir* (the flag-bearer of Kashmir). Their contribution is not merely confined to the dissemination of religious doctrines; rather, they constituted a comprehensive civilizational project that integrated spirituality, socio-economic reform, ethical restructuring, and cultural transformation.

The arrival of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA) in Kashmir marks a decisive turning point in the region's religious and socio-cultural history. Through his profound missionary zeal and visionary leadership, he played a pivotal role in transforming what may be described metaphorically as a spiritually, economically, and socially underdeveloped landscape into a flourishing center of Islamic learning and ethical refinement.

His reformative program operated simultaneously across four inter related domains: *'ilm* (knowledge), *ṣan'at* (industry and craftsmanship), *tahdhib* (culture and civilization), and *din* (the comprehensive Islamic worldview). By promoting intellectual inquiry, introducing artisanal skills and economic practices, cultivating refined cultural norms, and grounding these developments within a robust religious

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framework, he laid the foundations of a holistic Islamic social order in Kashmir.

Complementing and extending this mission, Sheikh Noor-ud-din Noorani (RA), himself a native Kashmiri, internalized and indigenized the Sufi message within the socio-cultural fabric of the region. His approach was marked by an acute sensitivity to the lived realities of the local population, particularly the marginalized and downtrodden sections of society. Through his teachings, delivered in the vernacular Kashmiri language, he effectively embedded the ethical and spiritual principles of Islam into the collective consciousness of the people. His emphasis on virtues such as purity, simplicity, contemplative reflection, patience (*ṣabr*), remembrance of God (*dhikr*), love, service, sacrifice, and unconditional submission to Allah and His final Messenger, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, contributed to the formation of a morally resilient and spiritually oriented society. The enduring impact of his methodology may be attributed to its organic rootedness in local culture and its capacity to resonate deeply with indigenous sensibilities.

Following the foundational contributions of these pioneering figures, Kashmir witnessed the arrival of numerous other Sufi saints and spiritual lineages, each contributing to the ongoing processes of Islamization and spiritualization. These Sufis introduced new currents of thought, diverse pedagogical techniques, and varied spiritual practices, thereby enriching the religious and intellectual landscape of the region. Among the most influential of these were the Naqshbandi

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Order and the Qadiri Order, both of which emerged as significant spiritual traditions within the broader historical trajectory of Kashmiri Islam. The Chishti Order, although a later development in the region, also contributed to the diversification of Sufi practices and the expansion of spiritual networks.

This study, in particular, focuses on the Naqshbandi order in Kashmir, with special reference to the Nizami branch, which played a crucial role in the dissemination and consolidation of Naqshbandi teachings in the region. The expansion of this order is closely associated with the efforts of distinguished spiritual figures such as Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali (RA) and Hazrat Ubaidullah Larvi (RA), whose missionary activities significantly contributed to the spread of this spiritual lineage. A detailed account of the genealogical and spiritual pedigree of Hazrat Baba Rajwali (RA) has been provided, highlighting the continuity and transmission of spiritual authority within the order.

The principal center of this Naqshbandi-Nizami tradition is located in Awoora Zarhama Kupwara, a historically significant village in the Kupwara district of Kashmir. This center has functioned as a focal point for spiritual instruction, communal Organization, and the perpetuation of Sufi practices. The mission initiated by Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali (RA) was further developed and institutionalized by his successors, including his son Hazrat Mawlana Mian Muhammad Muhammad Younus Naqshbandi (RA), his son and caliph Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob

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Naqshbandi (RA), and his grandson Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Maqbool Naqshbandi (MZ), who currently serves as the *Masnad-Nishin* (spiritual head) and guide of the order. Another son of Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA), namely Hazrat Pir Ghulam Nabi Naqshbandi (RA), migrated to Trimbli, Rajouri for the propagation and establishment of Naqshbandiya order. He constructed a Khanqah, a missionary center, to provide spiritual guidance and peace to the restless souls. Later on an educational institution was also established in the premises of the Khanqah for the pursuance of the religious and modern education and social services in the down trodden people.

The evolution of Islamic society in Kashmir represents a layered and continuous process of spiritual cultivation, ethical reform, and socio-cultural transformation, driven by the enduring legacy of Sufi thought and practice. The Naqshbandi order, particularly in its Nizami manifestation, stands as a vital component of this historical continuum, embodying both the preservation of tradition and the dynamic adaptation to changing social context.

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Naqshbandiya Order

Islam, as the final and complete message and system of life, revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, represents a comprehensive paradigm of unconditional submission (*Islam*) to the Divine will. It affirms the culmination of the Prophetic cycle in the personage of Muhammad ﷺ, thereby establishing the finality of Prophethood and the completion of divine guidance for humanity. Epistemologically, Islam constitutes an integrated system of knowledge that recognizes multiple sources of cognition: reason (*'aql*), sensory perception, intuition (*kashf* or *ilham*), and, above all, revelation (*waḥy*). Among these, revelation occupies the highest epistemic status, being direct, complete, and infallible as the unmediated communication of God. Other sources of knowledge serve as auxiliary means for understanding and interpreting the truths disclosed through revelation.

Contrary to reductive interpretations, Islam does not negate reason; rather, it elevates and refines it. Rational inquiry is not an end in itself but a means that ultimately leads to higher forms of cognition, including intuitive and experiential knowledge of the Divine. This ascent from discursive reasoning to intuitive realization reflects a movement toward a personal, immediate, and non-communicable awareness of God, who is understood as the ultimate Reality (*al-Ḥaqq*). In this sense, Islam not only encourages the search for truth but also directs the seeker toward the very axis of truth, which remains veiled by the lower self (*nafs al-ammara*) and the limitations of unrefined

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sensory perception.

Within this framework, Islam emphasizes the cultivation of love (*maḥabba*) and service (*khidma*) as central ethical principles. The relationship between the Creator and creation is grounded in a metaphysical bond of love, not in any necessity on the part of God, who is absolutely self-sufficient. Creation, therefore, is understood as an expression of divine love rather than a fulfillment of divine need. This theological perspective gives rise to the ethical ideal of *ithar* (altruism), whereby the individual prioritizes others over the self, embodying selflessness, generosity, and moral responsibility.

The concept of love in this context must be distinguished from its reduction to mere physical or sensual desire. True love, in Islamic metaphysics, signifies an attraction between existential realities, characterized by purity, simplicity, and transcendence. God, as the Absolute, is entirely simple (*basiṭ*), pure, and free from composition or dependency. While the Divine Essence remains beyond full communicability, it is metaphorically likened to a mirror that reflects the reality of existence. When the human heart is purified through spiritual discipline, it becomes capable of reflecting divine attributes. However, this reflection does not imply ontological identity; rather, it signifies a state of proximity and illumination.

This process of purification (*tazkiya*) culminates in a state of complete submission, wherein the individual transcends the limited and contingent aspects of existence and

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is transformed through the manifestation of divine attributes. This transformation is symbolically expressed in the Qur'anic verse,—*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*[1] which encapsulates the metaphysical centrality of divine light as the source of all existence and guidance. In this state, the human being becomes a locus of divine reflection, embodying ethical and spiritual luminosity.

Such absolute submission necessarily leads to active engagement with creation through love and service, as all beings are manifestations of divine attributes. Thus, devotion to God is inseparable from compassion toward creation. However, a fundamental dilemma confronting humanity is not a lack of intellectual capacity but an unwillingness to undertake the burden of understanding and moral responsibility. By neglecting rational and spiritual faculties, individuals fall into ingratitude (*kufr* in its broader sense), which in turn leads to ignorance, despair, loss of dignity, and ultimately to various forms of existential and theological deviation.

Islam, therefore, emerges as a call to light, unity, hope, dignity, creativity, and authenticity. It situates the human being as a *khalifa*, a vicegerent of God on earth, entrusted with the responsibility of ethical stewardship and creative participation in the divine order. In this context, *Tasawwuf* (Sufism) represents the inner, experiential dimension of Islam,

[1] Qur'ān, 24: 35. The translation of the Quranic verses are from Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Glorious Qur'an* (American Trust Publications)

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dedicated to the realization of these ideals. Its doctrinal edifice is constructed upon four foundational principles: *Tawḥid* (the oneness of God), *Risala* (Prophet hood and divine guidance), *Ma'ad* (eschatological accountability and life after death), and *Wahdat al-Insaniyya* (the unity of mankind).

As a spiritual discipline, *Tasawwuf* aims at the purification of the self and the cultivation of divine love within the human heart. Its historical impact is evident in its capacity to transform societies through a universal ethic of love, service, and moral refinement, grounded in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the last Messenger of God and the mercy to all creation (*raḥmat li'l-'alamin*). This transformative mission was carried forward by Sufi saints across diverse geographical, cultural, and social contexts, adapting their methodologies to local conditions while preserving the essential spirit of Islam.

Kashmir, often described as the paradise on earth, provides a particularly illuminating example of this Sufi-driven transformation. The arrival of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA), also known as *Shah-i-Hamadan* and *Amir-i-Kabir*, marked the beginning of a profound process of Islamization and spiritual renewal in the region.

As a distinguished scholar, Kubrawi Sufi, and missionary, he laid the intellectual and institutional foundations for Islamic civilization in Kashmir. Subsequently, various Sufi orders (*silsilas*) contributed to the enrichment of this tradition, integrating spiritual, cultural, and social dimensions into a cohesive civilizational framework.

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Among these, the Naqshbandi Order occupies a prominent position and is generally regarded as one of the four major Sufi orders of Islam, alongside the Qadiri Order, Chishti Order, and Suhrawardi Order. The Naqshbandi order traces its origin to Hazrat Khwaja Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (RA), whose teachings emphasized sobriety, silent remembrance (*dhikr khafi*), and strict adherence to the *Shari'a*. The spiritual genealogy of the order is linked to Hazrat Abu Bakr (RAA) and Hazrat Salman (RAA) the Persian, and is also associated with the concept of *Uwaysi* transmission, direct spiritual reception from the Prophet ﷺ without physical mediation.

The doctrinal and methodological development of the Naqshbandi order was significantly shaped by earlier Central Asian Sufi figures such as Hazrat Abu Yusuf Hamadani (RA), Hazrat Khwaja Ahmad Yasvi (RA), and Hazrat Abdul Khaliq Gajadwani (RA), a disciple of Hamadani (RA) and ultimately to Syed Amir Kalal (RA).

These figures contributed to the articulation of a disciplined spiritual path characterized by structured practices, including the formulation of foundational principles (often enumerated as eight or eleven rules) governing the conduct of the seeker. The emphasis on silent *dhikr* and internal spiritual vigilance became defining features of the Naqshbandi methodology.[2]

Historically, this tradition played a significant role in the Islamization of Central Asian societies, particularly among

[2] Jami, Abdul Rahman, *Nafhat ul Unus* (Lahore: Kashmiri Bazar), p. 415

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Turkic populations, and later extended its influence to regions such as Kashmir. Its integration into the Kashmir context further demonstrates the adaptability and enduring relevance of Sufi traditions in shaping religious, social, and cultural life across diverse human landscapes.

The *Naqshbandi* Principles: A Systematic Ethico-Spiritual Discipline

The Naqshbandi Order is distinguished by a rigorously structured methodology of spiritual discipline articulated through eight foundational principles, often referred to as the *kalimat-i-qudsiyya* (sacred maxims). These principles constitute a refined psycho-spiritual framework aimed at cultivating continuous awareness of the Divine presence and restructuring the inner life of the seeker (*salik*). Khwaja Naqshbandi's most concrete contribution to Sufi methodology is the inclusion of the eleven (11) principles, which later became the foundational spiritual practices of the Naqshbandiya order. These principles are based on the eight principles previously established by Hazrat Abdul Khaliq Gajdawani (RA). They are mentioned as:

1. ***Hosh dar dam* (Awareness in breathing):** This principle emphasizes conscious regulation of breath, wherein each inhalation and exhalation is accompanied by mindfulness of God. The Sufi must avoid heedlessness (*ghaflah*), ensuring that every breath becomes an act of remembrance and spiritual presence.
2. ***Nazar bar qadam* (Watching the steps):** The seeker is

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instructed to maintain vigilance over his physical and spiritual movement. By restraining the gaze and avoiding distractions, the salik preserves inner concentration and remains oriented toward the Divine goal.

3. ***Safar dar watan*** **(Journey within one's homeland):** This signifies an inward journey from blameworthy human traits to praiseworthy, angelic qualities. It entails moral purification, the abandonment of vices, and the refinement of the heart (*qalb*).
4. ***Khalwat dar anjuman*** **(Solitude in the crowd):** This principle reflects the paradox of spiritual life: outward social engagement combined with inward detachment. The Sufi remains externally active yet internally absorbed in the remembrance of God.
5. ***Yad kard*** **(Remembrance):** Continuous *dhikr* (remembrance), both vocal and silent, is central to Naqshbandi practice. Its objective is to engrain perpetual awareness of Al-Haqq within the heart.
6. ***Baz gasht*** **(Restraint/Returning):** The continuous recitation of *la ilaha illa Allah* serves as a mechanism of negation and affirmation, purifying the heart from all false attachments and affirming Divine unity.
7. ***Nigah dasht*** **(Watchfulness):** This involves guarding the mind against intrusive and negative thoughts during contemplation and remembrance, ensuring spiritual discipline and focus.
8. ***Yad dasht*** **(Recollection):** A higher spiritual state

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characterized by constant intuitive awareness of the Divine presence, transcending formal practices and becoming a permanent inner condition.[3]

The Three Dimensions of Spiritual Vigilance

These eight principles were further systematised and deepened by Hazrat Shah Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (RA) through three additional contemplative principles:

- ***Wuquf-i zamani* (Temporal awareness):** Continuous self-examination regarding the use of time. Proper utilisation leads to gratitude, while misuse necessitates repentance.
- ***Wuquf-i ʿadadi* (Numerical awareness):** monitoring the prescribed number of *dhikr* repetitions and evaluating their transformative impact on the heart, whether they negate vices and affirm Divine presence.
- ***Wuquf-i qalbi* (Cardiac awareness):** A state akin to *yad dasht*, wherein the seeker visualizes the heart as inscribed with the Divine Name, signifying exclusive orientation toward God.[4]

[3] Rizvi, A. A. *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. ii (elhi: Munshi Ram Manohar Lal Publishers), p. 243

[4] Trimmingham, J. S. *The Sufi Orders in Islam*.

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The *Naqshbandi* Order in Kashmir: Historical Emergence and Development

The introduction of the Naqshbandi order into Kashmir marks a significant phase in the spiritual and religious history of the region. It was first established by Hazrat Sayyid Hilal (RA), a direct disciple of Hazrat Khwaja Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (RA), who arrived in Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Sikandar (1389–1413). Hazrat Sayyid Hilal (RA) settled in the Asham area near Mansbal Lake and along the banks of the Jhelum River—the life line of Kashmir.

He passed away on 14 Rabi' al-Awwal 861AH (9 February1457 CE). He is buried on the bank of Manasbal Lake, now known as Nesbal (Sonawari). His principal successor was Hazrat Mir Sayyid Amin (RA), popularly known as *Wusi Sahib*, a Baihaqi Sayyid associated with the court of Zain-ul-Abidin. Sayyid Amin (RA) was an adopted son of Baihaqi Begum, wife of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (Badshah). He played a crucial role in sustaining the early Naqshbandi presence but was martyred in 889 AH (1484 CE). He was buried at Ali Kadal on the right bank of river Jhelum near the shrine of Hazrat Sayyid Sharaf-ud-Din Bulbul Shah (RA), the Suhrawardi saint credited with initiating the Islamization of Kashmir during the reign of Rinchana (*Sultan Sadr-ud-Din*).

Following his death, the Naqshbandi silsila experienced a period of relative obscurity lasting over a

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century. Its revival and expansion were significantly advanced by Hazrat Khwaja Khawand Mahmud Naqshbandi (RA) (b. 965 AH / 1557–58 CE), a prominent Alvi-Husaini saint remembered for his deep influence on the Sunni Muslims of Kashmir, whose lineage traced back to Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Ala al-Din Attar (RA), a key disciple of Hazrat Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (RA). Although his residence in Kashmir was brief, his repeated visits in the 17th century reinvigorated the Naqshbandi tradition.

His son, Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Naqshbandi (RA), permanently settled in Kashmir and further consolidated the order's institutional presence. One of the earliest and most prominent centers of the order is the shrine known as *Naqshband Sahib* in Srinagar, located in the historic locality of Khwaja Bazaar between Jamia Masjid and Khanyar area, famous for the Qadiriya shrine (commonly known as Dargah Dastageer Sahib) and also associated with other Sufi shrines.

The Naqshbandi order in Kashmir received renewed vitality through the influence of Hazrat Baqi Billah (RA), a distinguished Central Asian Sufi of Samarqandi origin. Born into a scholarly and mystical family, he was the son of Hazrat Qazi Abdul Salam (RA) and maternally linked to the lineage of Hazrat Khwaja Ubaidullah Ahrar (RA). His extensive travels in search of a *murshid kamil* (perfect guide) brought him into contact with Kashmir's vibrant Sufi milieu, where he engaged with figures such as Hazrat Baba Wali (RA) of Khwarazm at the Khanqah of Hazrat Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA).

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Among his successors, the most influential was Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA) (1564–1624), widely known as *Mujaddid Alf Thani* (Renewer of the Second Millennium). He played a decisive role in reforming Islamic thought and Sufi practice. Rejecting the monistic metaphysics of Ibn Arabi (RA), particularly the doctrine of *Wahdatal-Wujud* (Unity of Being), he articulated an alternative Framework known as *Wahdat al-Shuhud* (Unity of Perception). Through his writings and spiritual authority, he sought to realign Sufism with orthodox Islamic theology and law, thereby safeguarding the integrity of Islamic belief and practice.

Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's (RA) efforts are widely regarded as a turning point in the intellectual history of *Tasawwuf*, as he emphasized strict adherence to the *Shari'a*, moral discipline, and the purification of both individual and collective religious life. His influence extended across South and Central Asia, including Kashmir, where the Naqshbandi order continued to evolve as a vital force in shaping the region's spiritual, social, and intellectual landscape.

Among the Kashmiri disciples of Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA) (*Mujaddid Alf Thani*) was Hazrat Sheikh Mahdi Ali (RA) of Sopore, a distinguished scholar of considerable intellectual depth. He travelled to Delhi and received sermons and letters from Hazrat Mujaddid (RA), as well as from Hazrat Muhammad Sadiq Hamadani (RA), the author of biographical works such as *Silsilat al-Sadiqiyya* and *Hafiz Yusuf Ali*. Through these engagements, he became an important figure in the transmission of Mujaddidi intellectual

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and spiritual thought into Kashmir.

The great poet-philosopher Muhammad Iqbal paid him tribute in his poem, *"To the Punjabi Pirs"*:

"I stood by the Mujaddid's tomb: that dust Whence
orient light, here beneath heaven, springs; The dust
before whose atoms the stars hang Their heads, which
shrouds that knower of things unknown Who would not bend
his neck to Jehangir?
Whose ardent breath fans every free soul's ardour,
Whom Allah sent in season to keep watch In India,
in the honour of Islam"[5]

A brief examination of his philosophy of *Wahdat al-Shuhud* (unity of perception) is essential, particularly because it constitutes a systematic critique of the metaphysical doctrines of Hazrat Ibn Arabi (RA), one of the most influential theoreticians of Islamic mysticism.

Hazrat Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA), also known as Imam Rabbani and Mujaddid Alf Thani, was the son of Hazrat Sheikh Abdul Ahad (RA), a prominent mystic and disciple of Hazrat Abdul Quddus Gangohi (RA). Born on 14th Shawwal 971 AH (1564 CE) in Sirhind, Punjab, he belonged to the lineage of Hazrat Umar ibn-al-Khattab (RAA), the second caliph. His intellectual project and reformist struggle are remembered for three fundamental principles: strict adherence

[5] Kiernan, V. G. *Poems of Iqbal: Translated from Urdu* (Kutub Publishers Bombay).

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to the Shari'ah, revival of the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and the establishment of religion within the social and political order. His doctrine of *Wahdat al-Shuhud* represents a decisive moment in the development of Islamic philosophy and Sufism. Within his epistemological framework, esoteric knowledge is regarded as superior in depth to exoteric knowledge, yet it remains subordinate to revelation and Prophetic authority. He strongly opposed those mystical positions that asserted the superiority of sainthood over Prophethood, arguing instead that sainthood derives its validity only through conformity to the Prophetic model. In this formulation, sainthood is comparatively insignificant in relation to Prophethood.

He classified the Sufi hierarchy into three categories:

- *Wilaya* (sainthood)
- *Shahada* (conscious awareness of the spiritual goal)
- *Siddiqiyya* (truthful realization of ultimate reality)

Within this hierarchy, sainthood is considered an initial stage in the spiritual development of the mystic, whereas Siddiqiyya represents the highest stage of realization. All three stages, however, remain subordinate to Prophethood, which is a direct divine selection. Complete submission to the Prophet ﷺ and total conformity to his example constitute the only authentic path to spiritual realization. He did not emphasize traditional ascetic exercises as ends in themselves, but instead stressed disciplined adherence to revelation and ethical conduct. He also maintained the superiority of the

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Naqshbandi Order among the Sufi orders, emphasizing its unique genealogical linkage to both Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (RAA) and Hazrat Abu Bakr (RAA) through Hazrat Imam Jafar-al-Sadiq (AS). His critical thought is grounded in an epistemological emphasis on divine transcendence and the proper understanding of the relationship between God, cosmology, and the phenomenal world. At the same time, he maintains the validity of both formulations, *Hama Ust* (all is He) and *Hama Az Ust* (all is from Him), arguing that the difference between them lies in the standpoint from which reality is perceived rather than in any absolute contradiction.

Ibn Arabi (RA)'s Philosophy of *Wahdatal-Wujud* (Unity of Existence)

Ibn Arabi (RA), an eclectic thinker and a profound mystic theoretician, articulated his philosophy of existence, known as *Wahdat al-Wujud*, as a highly complex and intellectually demanding system. This doctrine, rooted in an expansive epistemological and cosmological framework, represents one of the most sophisticated metaphysical constructions in Islamic intellectual history. It is not easily accessible due to its conceptual depth and symbolic language, and it requires a high degree of philosophical and spiritual insight for proper comprehension. The influence of this system extended far beyond the Muslim intellectual tradition, leaving a significant imprint on broader philosophical discourses, including those in the Western intellectual world.

In the absence of a nuanced understanding of its

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philosophical depth, this doctrine was often either uncritically accepted or prematurely rejected by various mystics, theologians, and philosophers. Therefore, before examining the metaphysical divergence between Ibn Arabi (RA) and Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA), it is necessary to situate their ideas within their respective intellectual and historical contexts.

Ibn Arabi (RA) was primarily a philosopher-mystic who systematized the role of intuition and perception as valid modes of knowledge. In contrast, Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's (RA) intellectual project was shaped by the imperative to revive religious orthodoxy within a socio-political context marked by spiritual decline and doctrinal ambiguity. Ibn Arabi (RA) accorded primary importance to intuitive and experiential knowledge (*kashf* and *shuhud*), whereas Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA) regarded such experiences as subjective states of the mystic, not necessarily reflective of objective reality. For Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA), reality itself, grounded in revelation, remained the primary basis for understanding divine unity and other metaphysical truths.

In order to understand Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's (RA) critique, it is essential to first examine Ibn Arabi's (RA) treatment of the problem of *wujud* (being or existence). The entire structure of Islamic thought and civilization is established upon the central doctrine of *al-Tawhid* (the unity of God), which has been interpreted in diverse ways by mystics, theologians, and philosophers. Ibn Arabi (RA)

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conceptualizes God as *al-wujud al-mutlaq* (Absolute Being), the only real and necessary existence (*wajib al-wujud bi-dhatihi*). This Absolute Being is identical with the Divine Essence and serves as the ontological ground of all that exists. According to this view, the universe possesses no independent reality; its existence is relative, either actual or potential, and it is simultaneously eternal in one sense and temporally contingent in another. The entire cosmos is thus understood as a manifestation of the Divine.

Reality, in this system, may be apprehended from two distinct perspectives: as the essence underlying all phenomena, it is identified as *al-Haqq* (Ultimate Reality); as the multiplicity of appearances, it is understood as *khalq* (creation). When considered as manifestation, the world has no independent existence and exists only as the modes or expressions of the Divine. God is therefore both transcendent and immanent, encompassing all existence while remaining beyond it. Creation, in this framework, is not a discrete temporal event but a continuous process of divine self-disclosure. In this respect, Ibn Arabi (RA) diverges significantly from the great theoretician, philosopher, mystic, and theologian Al-Ghazali (RA), who maintained the doctrine of the createdness of the universe.

Within Ibn Arabi's (RA) metaphysical system, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is identified as *Haqiqat al-Haqaiq* (the Reality of Realities), functioning as the creative and rational principle of the universe. This principle is manifested in the concept of *al-Insan al-Kamil* (the Perfect Man), or the Logos, who

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represents the fullest expression of divine attributes within creation. Absolute Being, in its primordial state, is beyond all forms, multiplicity, names, attributes, and relations. It is therefore simple, indeterminate, and devoid of all limitations, rendering it ultimately indefinable, unknowable, and incommunicable.

Through a process of ontological descent (*tanazzul*), Absolute Being manifests itself across multiple levels of reality, commonly described as five stages (*tanazzulat al-khamsa*), which collectively exhaust the modalities of its manifestation. The first two stages are conceptual (*ta'ayyun i'tibari*), while the remaining three correspond to actualized modes of existence. In the first stage of descent, the Absolute remains implicit within its essence, representing the condition of absolute unity. This is entirely beyond determination, cognition, or communication. In the second stage, there emerges a form of self-awareness in which the Divine becomes cognizant of its attributes and names, moving from absolute unity to a differentiated yet unified consciousness of archetypal realities (*Ayan al Thabita*).

The third stage represents actual determination (*ta'ayyunat ruhi*), wherein existence differentiates into spiritual and material forms. At this level, human existence emerges as the most comprehensive manifestation, encompassing both material and spiritual dimensions. The fourth stage corresponds to ideal or imaginal determination (*ta'ayyun mithali*), while the fifth stage represents physical or corporeal determination (*ta'ayyun jasadi*). These stages

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collectively represent the progressive realization of the latent capacities inherent within Absolute Being.

While explaining these stages of descent, Hazrat Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA), who is often associated with a perspective closer to the unity of perception, interprets them not as actual descents of the Divine Essence, but rather as stages in the realization of the Absolute by the spiritual traveller (*salik*). In this interpretation, the emphasis shifts from ontological transformation to experiential realization.

Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's (RA) mystico-religious thought, articulated through the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Shuhud* (unity of perception), may be briefly defined as follows: the realization of truth, understood as the spiritual evolution of the traveller (*salik*), unfolds through three distinct stages:

a) ***Wujudiyyat***: the stage in which an apparent identity between God and creation is experienced.

b) ***Zilliyyat***: the stage in which the distinction between God and creation is intellectually recognized; however, this realization remains incomplete and lacks full authenticity.

c) ***Abdiyyat* (Servitude)**: the stage in which the traveller attains a complete and authentic understanding of the absolute distinction between God and creation. At this level, it is fully realized that God is the Necessary Being, while the cosmos is contingent, possessing only derived or possible existence.

The first two stages, namely *wujudiyyat* and *zilliyyat*,

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are considered inauthentic from the standpoint of ultimate realization, since God transcends all forms of empirical or experiential knowledge. His existence and attributes are beyond comprehension and cannot be fully grasped through intuitive or perceptual means. God cannot be known through *kashf* (intuition) or *shuhud* (perception); rather, true knowledge of God is attained through a higher form of realization grounded in revelation and disciplined spiritual insight. In this regard, Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA) aligns more closely with the Maturidi theological perspective while critically distancing himself from certain speculative tendencies. Ibn Arabi (RA) posits an ontological identity between God and the world, whereas Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA) interprets the world as the creation of God and as a reflection or manifestation of divine attributes without sharing in divine essence. He affirms the distinction between Absolute Being and its manifestations, maintaining that the world cannot be equated with God. According to his critique, the assertion that the world has no independent existence apart from God represents a misunderstanding of both reason and revealed doctrine. It undermines the affirmation of divine creativity and fails to account adequately for the ontological distinction between Creator and creation. The world is not an aspect of the Divine mind reflected in the mirror of Being; rather, it is a created order that manifests divine attributes without sharing in divine essence.

The Necessary Being (*wajib al-wujud*) and its adumbration (*zill*) are not identical, as maintained in certain

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interpretations of Ibn Arabi's (RA) doctrine. Such identification reflects a failure to distinguish between primordial reality and its manifestations. Even the divine attributes, though eternal, are not identical with created existence. God remains absolute, self-subsisting, omnipotent, omniscient, and independent of all. While Ibn Arabi (RA) emphasizes the metaphysical significance of the five stages of descent (*tanazzulat al-khamsa*), Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA) maintains that the universe is a creation of God and must be understood within the framework of divine transcendence.

Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA) regarded *Wahdat al-Wujud* as a preliminary stage in the spiritual ascent of the Sufi. He consistently emphasized adherence to orthodox Islamic theism and strict conformity to the Shari'ah. While acknowledging the experiential dimension of unity described by the proponents of *Wahdat al-Wujud*, he reinterpreted it as a subjective state rather than an objective ontological condition. In contrast to those who viewed creation as the direct manifestation of divine essence, he maintained that created entities do not possess independent ontological reality, but neither are they identical with the Divine. The unity between non-existence and Being is therefore impossible, and any such claim reflects a conceptual confusion between manifestation and essence.

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Succession

Hazrat Mian Muhammad Masoom (RA), the third son of the Hazrat Mujaddid (RA), was born on 11 Shawwal 1007 AH (7 May 1599 CE) and was regarded by his father as a highly auspicious figure, particularly due to his association with Hazrat Baqi Billah (RA). From an early age, he exhibited remarkable spiritual aptitude and attained advanced stages of mystical realization by the age of fourteen. These early attainments led Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA) to predict that Hazrat Mian Muhammad Masoom (RA) would become a future *Qutb*. He provided him with intensive spiritual training through private instruction, guiding him toward higher levels of knowledge and realization. Ultimately, he appointed him as his successor and identified him as a divinely designated spiritual authority (*Qayum*).

It remains unclear from the available letters and writings of Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA) whether he formally appointed a caliph in Kashmir from among his disciples distributed across various regions of the Indian subcontinent. It is possible that the presence of Hazrat Khwaja Khawand Mahmud (RA) in the region influenced this decision. The task of extending the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi order in Kashmir was effectively undertaken by Hazrat Mian Muhammad Masoom (RA) through his disciples from Hazara and Pakhli. A new phase in the development of the order was thus inaugurated through its transmission to Kashmir via his disciple Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA), also known as Baba Ji Kiyanvi.

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Hazrat Mian Muhammad Masoom (RA) was a strict adherent of the Shari'ah and of his father's teachings. He emphasized that mystical perfection remains incomplete without adherence to religious law. Like his father, he advocated the eradication of religious innovations and the restoration of the purity of the Sunnah within Sufism. He argued that this responsibility extends beyond the scholarly class and applies equally to spiritual leaders. Those spiritual figures who failed to uphold this mission, he criticized severely. As a committed successor of the Mujaddid, he actively defended his teachings in both *Shari'ah* (legal) and spiritual (*Tariqah*) domains, as evidenced by his extensive correspondence with his disciples, in which he clarified doctrinal issues and addressed emerging doubts.

He also maintained close relations with the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, whom he regarded as a protector of religion. During his stay in Medina, he is reported to have received a vision at the tomb of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ indicating Aurangzeb's future accession to power. Upon returning to India, he established contact with the prince and stayed engaged with political developments of the time.

Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA), widely known as Baba Ji Sarkar, emerged as one of the most prominent Naqshbandi saints of Kashmir. In addition to his affiliation with the Naqshbandi order, he was also trained in the Qadiri, Chishti, and Suhrawardi traditions. He was born in Attah Muqam Kiyan in the Neelam Valley in a family associated with Baba Sultanal-Malik Badshah. His lineage

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was also connected to the Mughal ruling elite, including Aurangzeb. He became a disciple of Hazrat Mian Muhammad Masoom (RA) through Hazrat Khwaja Abdul Aziz Naqshbandi (RA).

A committed follower of the Shari'ah and a learned scholar of Islamic sciences, he dedicated himself to the propagation of Islam in both its doctrinal and ethical dimensions. He initiated numerous followers into the Naqshbandi path and played a central role in its institutional consolidation. His early education was received in his native region, after which he pursued advanced studies at the madrasa of Hazrat Khwaja Sulaiman Toonsavi (RA), where he remained for six years and was also initiated into the Chishti order. Despite his scholarly achievements, he continued his search for a perfect spiritual guide, eventually arriving in Kashmir, where he encountered Sidiq Mir, who guided him toward his future settlement.

Amongst his disciples, Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali (RA) is of prime importance. Under the guidance of Khwaja Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA), he underwent rigorous spiritual discipline, including sustained devotional practices, service to humanity, and intellectual training. He also composed several works, which remain in manuscript form and are preserved within his family. His personal life included a large family structure, and his descendants continued the Naqshbandi tradition across different regions.

Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Younis Naqshbandi (RA) continued this legacy, establishing familial

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and spiritual connections across regions such as Rawalpindi and Kashmir. His household and descendants remained closely associated with the Naqshbandi order and were guided by figures such as Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Qasim Sadiq Moharavi (RA). The continuity of this lineage reflects the sustained transmission of spiritual authority and ethical teachings within the order.

The missionary zeal of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA) reached its fullest expression through his successors especially Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali (RA), including his disciple and son Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Younis Naqshbandi (RA). They emphasized the cultivation of divine love and service to humanity, addressing both spiritual and social needs of the people. Their efforts included the promotion of education, the eradication of ignorance, and the development of moral virtues such as generosity, humility, and social responsibility.

They also contributed to social development through practical initiatives such as the construction of roads, assistance to the poor, and the establishment of educational structures. Their approach integrated spiritual discipline with social reform, reflecting a comprehensive understanding of human development that combined religious, ethical, and communal dimensions.

The main features of the Naqshbandiya-Mujaddidiya order, particularly as developed through the sub-order associated with the disciples of Hazrat Mian Muhammad Masoom (RA), the third son and successor within the

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Mujaddidi lineage, and further propagated by figures such as Khwaja Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA), may be summarized as follows:

1) The lineage includes influential figures such as Hazrat Muhammad Qasim (RA) of Mohra Sharif, who served as the spiritual guide of Pir Mian Muhammad Younis Naqshbandi (RA). He was the contemporary of Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali (RA), and Hazrat Ubaidullah Larvi (RA). They played a central role in the consolidation and expansion of the order within Kashmir and its surrounding regions.

2) Their missionary activities were particularly concentrated in tribal and remote areas, where populations lived under conditions of economic deprivation and limited access to formal education. These communities, often residing in forested regions and mountainous terrains, were characterized by social marginalization and lack of institutional support.

3) Their efforts were directed toward both the purification of the self (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and the broader process of Islamization and spiritualization of social life. They emphasized the importance of education in both religious sciences (*ulum al-din*) and modern knowledge systems, seeking to eradicate ignorance and promote a balanced and meaningful life in both the temporal and eschatological dimensions.

4) They were actively engaged in social service, providing assistance to the poor, orphans, widows, and the

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destitute. They instructed their followers to serve humanity in accordance with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who emphasized the unity and dignity of all creation. They rejected all forms of social superiority based on class, ethnicity, language, or race, affirming instead that true distinction lies in moral excellence.

5) These Sufi figures consistently emphasized that divine pleasure is attained through service to creation. Service to humanity was regarded as a foundational principle of sainthood (*wilaya*), and no individual could attain spiritual realization without undergoing proper guidance, purification, and active engagement in the service of others.

6) Through these combined efforts, they contributed to the authentic development and dissemination of Islamic spiritual tradition. They adhered strictly to the Shari'ah, affirmed the absolute sovereignty of God as the creator and sustainer of the universe, and upheld the Prophetic model as the ultimate guide for humanity. In accordance with the Sunnah, they established charitable institutions such as communal kitchens (*langar khanas*) within Sufi centers (*khanqahs*) to provide sustenance for the needy. Their intellectual formation in the religious sciences was complemented by their advanced spiritual discipline, enabling them to integrate knowledge, practice, and service into a coherent ethical and spiritual system.

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Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA) and his sons and caliphs, namely Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Younis Naqshbandi (RA) (his elder son), Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob Naqshbandi (RA) (his grandson), and their successors, represent living embodiments of this exalted and illuminating spiritual tradition and method. Their lives and teachings illustrate the continuity of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi path as a dynamic and ethically grounded system of spiritual cultivation.

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The Golden Chain

Genealogical Tree of
Khwaja Syed Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (RA)

Hazrat Khatamul Ambiya Ahmad Mujtaba

Muhammad Mustafa (SAAS)

↓

Hazrat Fatima al-Zahra (AS)

↓

Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (AS)

↓

Hazrat Imam Hasan ibn Ali (AS)

↓

Hazrat Imam Hussain ibn Ali (AS)

↓

Hazrat Imam Zain al-Abidin (AS)

↓

Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (AS)

↓

Hazrat Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (AS)

↓

Hazrat Imam Musa al-Kazim (AS)

↓

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Hazrat Imam Ali al-Raza (AS)

↓

Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Taqi (AS)

↓

Hazrat Imam Muhammad al-Naqi (AS)

↓

Hazrat Imam Hasan al-Askari (AS)

↓

Syed Ali Akbar (RA)

↓

Syed Fakhurddin (RA)

↓

Syed Taqi Sufi Khalwati (RA)

↓

Syed Bulaq (RA)

↓

Syed Mahmood (RA)

↓

Syed Burhanuddin (RA)

↓

Syed Shaban (RA)

↓

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Syed Qasim (RA)

↓

Syed Zain-ul-Abidin (RA)

↓

Syed Abdullah (RA)

↓

Syed Jalal-ud-din (RA)

↓

Syed Muhammad Bukhari (RA)

↓

Syed Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (RA)

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The Naqshbandiya Tree of Order

Naqshbandiya is also named as Khuwajgaaniya. The order is named after the name of Hazrat Khwaja Baha ud Din (RA), a Tajik who served his apprenticeship under both as-Sammasi and Kulali (the poller) tradition. The order spread into Anatolia and Caucasus, among the Kurds and received live response and was accepted as the spiritual path and order by the central Asians, Afghanistan, Indian Subcontinent especially in Kashmir, and received popularity in Arab world. It was Hazrat Shaikh Masoom (RA), the son of Hazrat Mujadid Alf Thani (RA) whose disciples successfully worked for the proposition of the Mujadidiya silsila in Balkan and Arab lands. The order succeeds from Hazrat Abdul Khaliq Gujdawani (RA) and culminates in Hazrat Baha ud Din Naqshband (RA) as:

Spiritual Tree of *Naqshbandiya* Order (Tree of *Tariqa*)

1. Hazrat Prophet Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ
2. Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (RAA)
3. Hazrat Salmanal-Farsi(RAA)
4. Hazrat Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr(RAA)
5. Hazrat Imam Jafar as-Sadiq(RAA)
6. Hazrat Bayazid Bistami(RA)
7. Hazrat Khwaja Abul Hassan Ali al-Khirqani (RA)
8. Hazrat Khwaja Bu Ali al-Farmadi(RA)
9. Hazrat Khwaja Abu Yaqoob Yusuf al-Hamadani(RA)

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10. Hazrat Khwaja Abdul Khaliq al-Ghajdawani (RA)
11. Hazrat Khwaja Arif ar-Regari(RA)
12. Hazrat Khwaja Mahmud al-Khair Faghnawi(RA)
13. Hazrat Khwaja AzizanAli ar-Ramiyatani(RA)
14. Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad as-Samasi(RA)
15. Hazrat Khwaja Sayyid Amir Ali Kulal(RA)
16. Hazrat Khwaja Syed Muhammad Bahauddin Naqshband(RA)
17. Hazrat Khwaja Alauddin Attar(RA)/ Hazrat Abdur Rahman Jami(RA)
18. Hazrat Khwaja Yaqoob al-Charkhi(RA)
19. Hazrat Khwaja Ubaydullah al-Ahrar(RA)
20. Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Zahid Wakhshi (RA)
21. Hazrat Khwaja Darwesh Muhammad Sabazwari(RA)
22. Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Muqtada Amkangi(RA)

Naqshbandiya Sufi Order in the Indian Subcontinent

23. Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Baqi Billah (RA)
24. Mujadid Alf Thani Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi Faruqi(RA)
25. Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Masoom Sirhindi (RA)
26. Hazrat Muhamad Hujjatullah Sirhindi (RA)
27. Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Zubair Sirhindi(RA)

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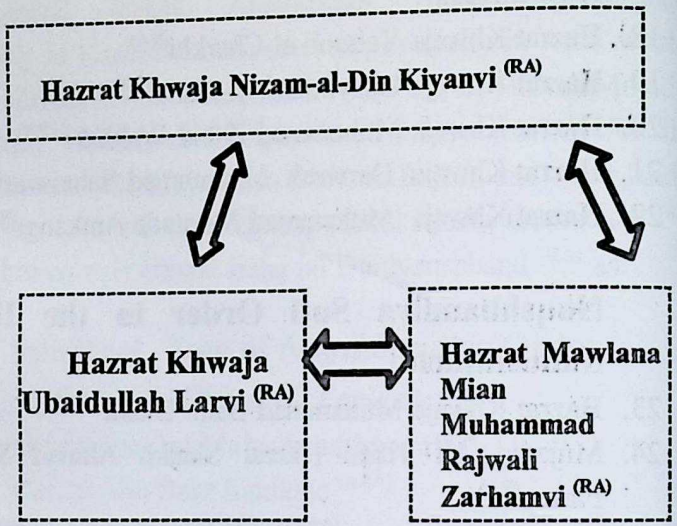
Naqshbandiya Order in Kashmir

Spiritual Tree of Darbar-e-Aaliya Younsia Mujadidiya Naqshbandiya, Awoora, Zarhama Kupwara, Kashmir.



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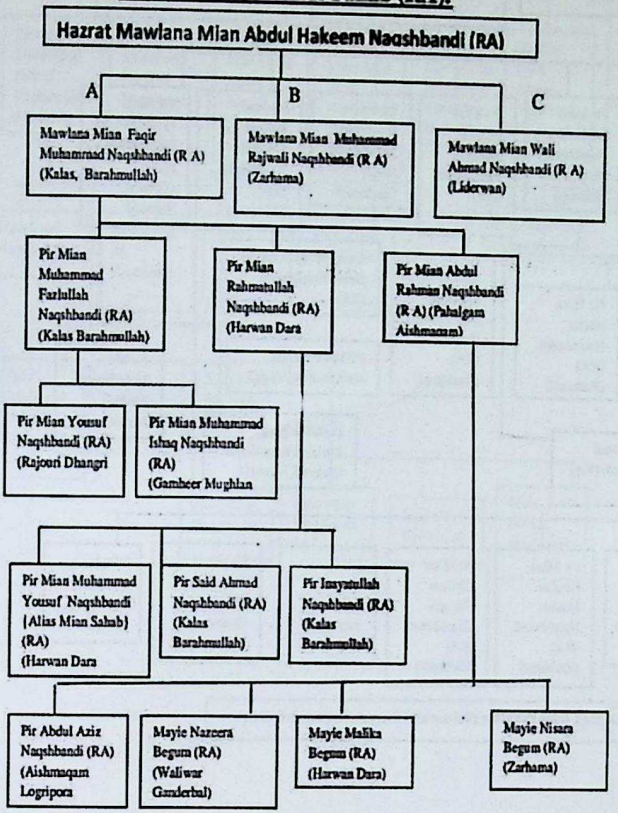
In The Name Of Allah The Most Merciful The Most Gracious

Family Tree Of Hazrat Mawlana Mian Abdul Hakeem Naqshbandi Sahab (RA).



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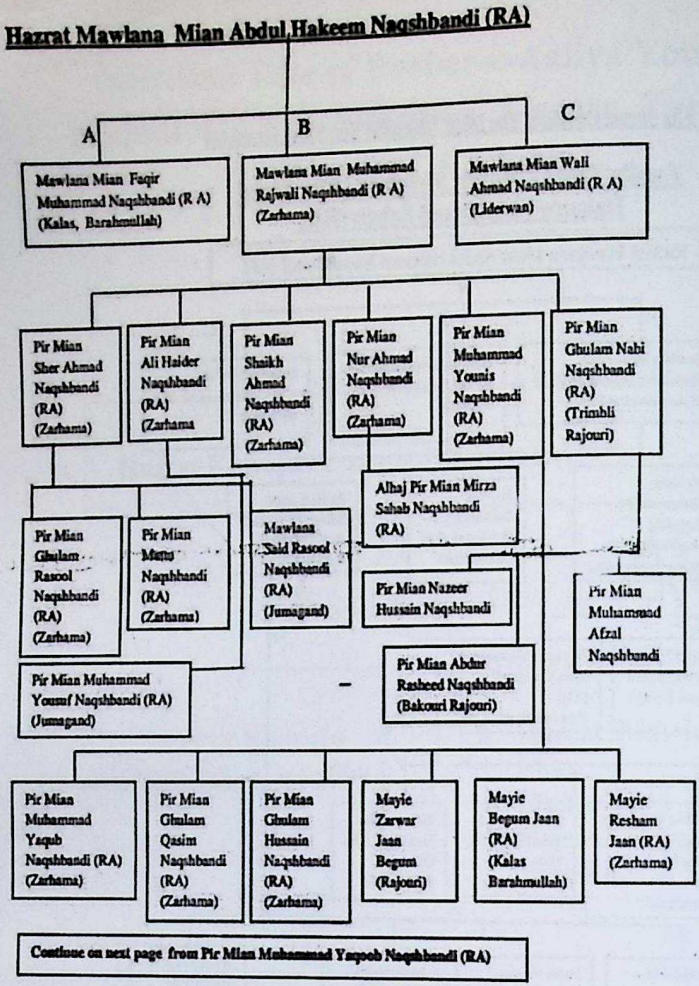

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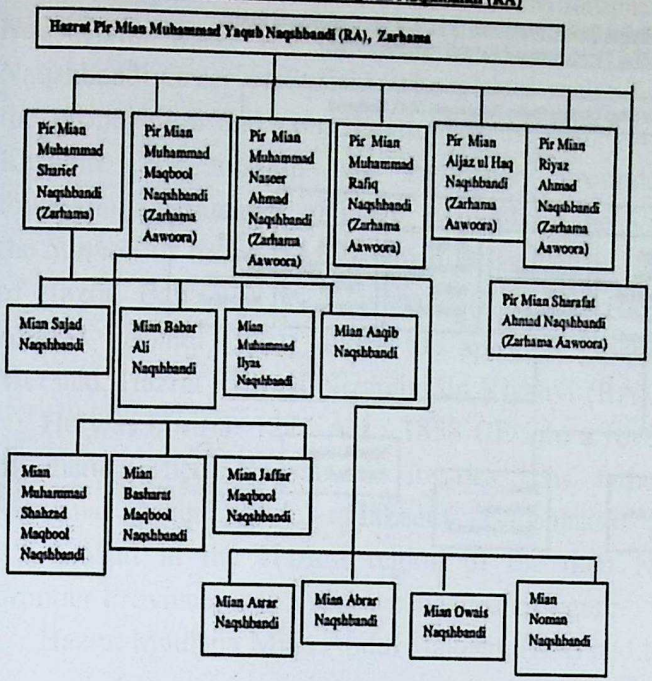
Cont...

Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob Naqshbandi (RA), The Grandson of Hazrat Mian Mawlana Pir Muhammad Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA)



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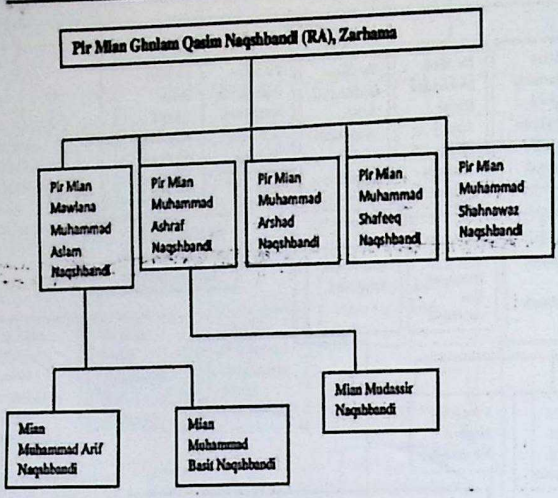
Cont...

Pir Mian Ghulam Qasim Naqshbandi (RA), Another Grandson of Hazrat Mian Mawlana Pir Muhammad Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA)



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Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali Naqshbandi Zarhamvi (RA)

Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA) was one of the eminent saints of the Naqshbandi Order of Sufism, who played a significant role in the propagation and consolidation of the Sufi way of life in Kashmir. His mission was rigorously grounded in the foundational principles of Islam, particularly the *Shari'ah* and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as well as the teachings of Hazrat Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (RA) and Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA), under the spiritual guidance of his Murshid, Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA).

He was born in 1275 AH / 1858 CE into a revered family of distinguished Naqshbandi mystics. His father, Hazrat Maulana Mian Abdul Hakeem Naqshbandi (RA) of Abbottabad in the Hazara region of the then North-West Frontier Province, was a renowned spiritual figure.

Hazrat Maulana Mian Abdul Hakeem (RA) had three sons:

1. Mian Faqir Muhammad Naqshbandi (RA)
2. Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali (RA).
3. Mian Wali Ahmad Naqshbandi (RA)

All three were well-versed in Islamic sciences and demonstrated a high level of intellectual and spiritual refinement in both *Shari'ah* and *Tariqa*.

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Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali (RA) received his early education under the supervision of his father, who initiated him into the Islamic intellectual and spiritual tradition, emphasizing adherence to the Prophetic Sunnah and the study of the Qur'an as the primary source of knowledge and wisdom. Subsequently, he pursued formal education in Hazara, and at Dar-ul-Uloom Pakhli. After completing his early studies, he moved to Lahore, where he continued his higher education in Arabic at a reputed institution.

He was nurtured in an environment that combined piety, scholarship, and both traditional and modern systems of knowledge. As a scholar of considerable repute, he belonged to the classical tradition of Islamic scholarship, characterized by multidimensional expertise. He distinguished himself particularly in the fields of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*). He also undertook a translation and commentary of the Qur'an in Urdu; however, this work remains unpublished and is preserved within his family archives.

During his extended stay at Kiyan, in the *khanqah* of his spiritual guide Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA), he engaged deeply in spiritual practices, Sufi disciplines, and the study of religious traditions. Under the vigilant supervision of his guide, he developed a refined understanding of both the theoretical and practical dimensions of mysticism. Owing to his piety, intellectual depth, and insight into human affairs, he was entrusted with the responsibility of addressing the socio-

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religious and familial concerns of individuals who visited the *khanqah*. He issued legal and ethical guidance in accordance with Islamic law, particularly within the Hanafi tradition associated with Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifa (RA).

The decline of the Mughal Empire marked a period of profound crisis for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. This decline was not merely a political transition but represented the disintegration of an entire socio-cultural and ethical order rooted in Islamic values. The subsequent dominance of colonial powers and competing socio-religious forces led to widespread disruption, marginalization, and loss of institutional coherence.

The causes of this decline were not exclusively external; rather, they were deeply connected to internal factors, including moral degradation, spiritual decline, political conspiracies within ruling elites, and a general neglect of educational, technological, and organizational advancement. These internal weaknesses contributed significantly to the collapse of a once vibrant civilization.

The emergence of new political powers further weakened the socio-cultural position of Muslims. Kashmir, in particular, experienced prolonged periods of political subjugation, leading to socio-economic marginalization and spiritual disorientation among its population.

In such conditions, the role of Sufi orders and social reformers became critically important. Various Sufi orders, including the Suhrawardiyya, Kubrawiyya, Qadiriyya, Chishtiyya, and Naqshbandiyya, undertook the task of

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diagnosing the crisis and responding to it through spiritual renewal, ethical reform, and social engagement. Their approach combined missionary zeal with compassion and a deep understanding of human needs.

Hazrat Mir Syed Ali Hamadani (RA), also known as Shah-i-Hamadan, had earlier established a model for such transformative engagement by redefining Kashmiri culture and guiding it toward a spiritually grounded social order. Subsequent Sufi scholars and saints continued this legacy, working toward the revival of religious authenticity and moral integrity, particularly within urban and linguistically central regions of Kashmir.

It was, however, Hazrat Baba Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA) of Kiyan Sharif in the Neelam Valley who extended this mission to the mountainous and linguistically distinct regions inhabited by Pahari-speaking communities. This expansion marked a significant phase in the diffusion of Sufi influence across diverse social landscapes.

In the broader Indian context, parallel efforts of reform and revival were undertaken by figures such as Syed Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Iqbal, as well as by institutions such as the Deoband movement and the Sufi centers of Bareilly. Within the Naqshbandi tradition, the Mujaddidi, Shah Waliullahi, and Masoomi branches played a dynamic role in reconstruction of Islamic thought and practice.

The Naqshbandiyya-Masoomiyya branch, in particular, assumed a central role in Kashmir under the leadership of Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali (RA), who,

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upon the advice of his Murshid, migrated from Hazara and Kiyan to Kupwara and established himself in the village of Zarhama. His work was complemented by other Naqshbandi masters operating across different regions of Kashmir, contributing collectively to the spiritual and social revitalization of the area.

The historic *khanqah* of the Naqshbandiyya located in Khwaja Bazaar in Srinagar holds significant historical importance as a center of spiritual activity. Under the leadership of Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali (RA), a network of missionary centers was established across Kashmir, Rajouri, the Pir Panjal region, and parts of Punjab, often administered by his disciples, including his sons. His mission followed two broad classical lines established by earlier Sufi traditions:

a) ***Tazkiya al-Nafs*** **(purification of the soul):** This involved comprehensive spiritual education and moral training aimed at elevating the seeker. It emphasized knowledge, ethical refinement, and the realization of truth, in accordance with the Prophetic mission.

b) ***Khidmat al-Khalq*** **(service to humanity):** This included practical social service such as providing food, clothing, and financial assistance to the needy, as well as facilitating marriages for economically disadvantaged individuals.

These principles formed the core of his missionary activity. He treated all human beings with equality and

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impartiality, emphasizing moral excellence and spiritual refinement. His teachings focused on purifying the heart from negative tendencies, cultivating virtuous character, and guiding individuals toward higher spiritual realization, a state described in classical Islamic thought as ultimate felicity. This entire framework of ethical conduct and social responsibility is rooted in the Qur'anic message and the normative tradition of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Qur'an explicitly enjoins acts of compassion and selfless service in the following terms:
"*And they give food, out of love for Him, to the needy, the orphan, and the captive, (saying): We feed you for the sake of God alone; We seek from you neither reward nor gratitude*".[6]

In a similar vein, Abdullah-ibn-Umar (RAA) reports that the Prophet ﷺ declared that feeding the poor and offering greetings to both known and unknown members of the community constitute among the most virtuous and exemplary acts within Islam. These teachings formed an essential part of the Prophetic Sunnah and were rigorously embodied and institutionalized by the Sufi tradition. The establishment of the *khanqah* as a center of spiritual instruction and the *langar* system as a means of providing food to the needy represent enduring contributions of Sufi institutions to social welfare and communal harmony. This tradition was also paralleled within academic institutions, including madrasas and classical centers of learning such as the Nizamiyya of Nishapur, which

[6] Qur'an, 76: 8–9

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combined intellectual training with social responsibility.

Hazrat Baba Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA) exemplified this integrated model of spiritual discipline and ethical conduct. His life reflected a synthesis of knowledge, piety, and refined moral character. His mission was intellectually profound, spiritually vibrant, and socially engaged. He taught the Qur'an, Hadith, and the Prophetic Sunnah, while also transmitting the legacy of the family of the Prophet ﷺ, the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and the Companions. In addition, he drew upon the teachings of major Sufi authorities such as Hazrat Baha-ud-Din Naqshband (RA), Hazrat Baqi Billah (RA), and Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA), as well as the broader network of Sufi lineages often referred to as the "golden chain", including the Qadiri, Suhrawardi, Chishti, and Kubrawi traditions. Nevertheless, his primary emphasis remained on the Naqshbandi method, particularly as transmitted through his guide Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA).

His missionary efforts were especially directed toward marginalized communities in the mountainous regions of Kashmir, including Gujjar and Pahari populations, although his influence also extended to Kashmiri-speaking communities. He actively promoted the re-establishment and implementation of the Shari'ah in everyday life, considering it an essential and indispensable condition for authentic spiritual development and ultimate success.

The distinguished family of Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali (RA) comprised three marriages and their

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respective descendants. His first wife, Begum Nur (RA), belonged to a respected mercantile family of Kupwara. His second wife came from the Gostani Pathan lineage, and his third wife belonged to the Malik family of Kupwara. His first wife, Begum Nur (RA), bore Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Younis Naqshbandi (RA). From his second wife was Mian Ghulam Nabi Naqshbandi (RA), who is buried in Rajouri. From his third wife were Mian Sher Ahmad (RA), Mian Ali Haider (RA), Mian Shaikh Ahmad (RA), and Mian NurAhmad (RA), all of whom lived simple lives and are buried in Zarhama.

Manqabat of Babaji Hazrat Mawlana Mian Muhammad Rajwali Zarhamwi (RA)

آں رئیس سالکان و زاہداں
نور حیدر رحمت و شفقت نشاں

He, the master of the travellers of the path (Suluk) and the ascetics
The ray of Ḥaydar's light, bearing the signs of mercy and compassion.

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مرشد بیمار حق مرشد روشن ضمیر
با صفا و دل نشین و دل پزیر

A guide to those who are spiritually afflicted in the path of Truth, illumined in inward conscience;
pure in soul, pleasing to the heart, and graciously received by all hearts.

آن پناه اصفیا رمز کلام
نام نامش کیا نوی حضرت نظام

He, the refuge of the purified saints, knower of the mysteries hidden in speech;
Blessed and illustrious is the exalted name of Hazrat Nizam ud Din Kiyanvi (R A)

سازمان راه سلمان نقش بند
از صدیق کبر یا حق یافتند

He adorned and ordered the Naqshbandi path in the manner of Salman;
from the Great Ṣiddiq he inherited the invocation of "Ḥaqq!"

محور علم و صفاء صبر و رضا
ابن حیدر صادق آل عبا

He, the pivot of knowledge and purity, patience and spiritual contentment;
a true son of Ḥaydar, belonging to the sacred Household of the Truthful.

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قلب او روشن شده از ذکر حق
چشم گریاں تربتر از فکر حق

His heart became luminous and radiant through the remembrance of God;
His tearful eyes were moistened through contemplation of the Divine Truth.

آں نقیب رحمت خیر الوریٰ
مظہر جام علوم مصطفیٰ ﷺ

He, the herald of the mercy of the Best of Creation ﷺ;
the manifestation of the overflowing cup of Muṣṭafa's ﷺ knowledge.

یک نگاہ حضرت بابا ولی
می کشاید باب انوار جلی

A single glance from Hazrat Baba Wali—
and the gates of manifest lights are opened wide.

راز دان داستان نقشبند
راز دان جلوہ ہائے نقشبند

He, the knower of the hidden tale and saga of the path of Naqshband;
the knower of the magnificent glories of the path of Naqshband.

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از وجود آں همه گل زار شد
جوئے بار محرماں پر کار شد
Through his existence, all blossomed into gardens;
and the flowing stream of the intimates filled with abundant grace.

عاشقاں در دامنش یا بد جمال
ثروت رمز هدی نقش کمال
The lovers received beauty under his hem and robe;
the treasure of guidance, mystery and the imprint of perfection.

مردم کهسار و بطل ذی وقار
هم نشین محرمانِ برگ و بار
A man of the mountains and a hero of noble dignity;
the companion of knowers of sacred path.

دیده اش پر از سرور مرتضی
مرتضی ، مشکل کشا، شیر خدا
His eyes were filled with the delight of Murtaḍa;
the remover of difficulties, the Lion of God.

پاک باز و پاک بین و پاک خو
نازنین و مهربان و پاک رو
Pure in conduct, vision, and disposition;
gentle, compassionate, and virtuous.

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آں بنائے جوئے بار نقش بند
در زمین کا شمیر دل پسند

He, the builder of the flowing stream of Naqshbandi grace;
throughout the beloved land of Kashmir.

آں پناہ عاشقان اولیا
آں ردائے واصلان اصفیا

He, the refuge of the lovers of the saints;
*the mantle of honour for the purified.**

* Author's poem; translated by Dr. Haroon Rashid Zargar Naqshbandi

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Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Younis Naqshbandi (RA)

Among his successors, Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Younis Naqshbandi (RA) emerged as a particularly prominent figure. He adhered closely to the spiritual path and became widely recognized as a distinguished spiritual guide endowed with deep intuitive insight. He played a systematic, creative, and influential role in the propagation, expansion, and institutional consolidation of the Naqshbandi order, particularly in the mountainous regions of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as in parts of Punjab and the North-West Frontier region (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).

He was born in Zarhama in the late nineteenth century. He received his early education in Islamic law and theology under the guidance of his father, Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA), and later completed his formal education in Islamic sciences at Dar al-Ulum Pakhli in Hazara. During his adolescence, he experienced the profound loss of his father, which interrupted his early spiritual training. Following the completion of his formal education, he sought spiritual guidance in accordance with his father's advice and submitted himself to the renowned Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi master Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Qasim Sadiq (RA) of Mohra Sharif.

Endowed with a deep intellectual inclination and a strong capacity for spiritual understanding, he attained advanced knowledge of both the exoteric and esoteric

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dimensions of Islam under the guidance of Khwaja Muhammad Qasim Sadiq (RA), who was a highly respected spiritual authority and guide to numerous seekers. His network of spiritual influence extended across regions including Iran, the Arab world, Kashmir, Tibet, China, and Central Asia.

He belonged to a lineage tracing back to Hazrat Umar-ibn-al-Khattab (RAA) and was connected to the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order through the spiritual chain leading to Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Thani (RA). His family was associated with a distinguished lineage originating in Iran, commonly referred to as the Kiyani family. His ancestors migrated from Iran through Afghanistan to Tibet, and later to Kabul, from where the family eventually extended into Kashmir through commercial activity.

Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Qasim (RA) was born in Kashmir following the migration of his ancestors. After the early death of his father, he was raised and educated under the guidance of his mother, who was herself a learned and pious figure. He pursued his early education locally before continuing his studies at Piswal and later under Hazrat Maulana Nimatullah Khan (RA) in Aligarh. He subsequently travelled to Delhi, where he spent several years advancing his studies in theology and spirituality. Upon returning, he established a madrasa in Jaikot village.

Despite his extensive education, he continued his search for a perfect spiritual guide and ultimately submitted himself to Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA). Under his guidance, he underwent rigorous spiritual training and was

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later instructed to proceed to Masyada, where he engaged in guiding seekers and serving the broader community.

His mission is clearly reflected in the instructions he gave to his son and successor, Sahibzada Pir Nazir Ahmad (RA):

1. He emphasized the importance of kindness and compassion toward family members, even in the face of difficulty.
2. He instructed him to remain in the same place of service and continue the mission of guiding and serving the people.
3. He emphasized the necessity of feeding the poor and ensuring that such service should never be discontinued.
4. He instructed him to maintain equality and avoid all forms of discrimination between rich and poor, while safeguarding the trust entrusted to him.

Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Qasim (RA) was one of the three principal caliphs of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA), the other two being Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA) and Hazrat Baba Ubaidullah Larvi (RA).

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Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob Naqshbandi (RA)

Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob Naqshbandi (RA) emerged as a distinguished representative of the Naqshbandi spiritual tradition, whose life and teachings significantly contributed to the diffusion and consolidation of Sufi thought in Kashmir and beyond. His spiritual personality, characterized by purity of heart, intellectual clarity, and ethical discipline, rendered him an influential guide (*murshid*) who inspired and transformed the inner lives of a vast number of followers. Through his commitment to the principles of remembrance of God and ascetic simplicity, he cultivated a mode of spiritual life that emphasized sincerity, humility, and constant awareness of the Divine presence. His methods of spiritual training, deeply rooted in the Naqshbandi discipline, were designed to awaken the heart and direct it toward the attainment of divine pleasure.

He was born into the distinguished spiritual lineage of Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Younis Naqshbandi (RA), a recognized spiritual authority of the Naqshbandi order, during the fourth decade of the twentieth century in the village of Awoora, Zarhama. This village had already attained prominence as a center of Naqshbandi activity through the efforts of his grandfather, Hazrat Baba Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA). His early life was marked by adversity, as he lost his father at a young age. Following this loss, his upbringing and

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early formation were undertaken by his mother, a woman distinguished by exceptional piety, moral refinement, and deep spiritual awareness. Her consistent guidance, characterized by compassion and intellectual clarity, played a decisive role in shaping his spiritual disposition, nurturing in him a profound love for God, unwavering reliance upon divine providence, and a sustained commitment to remembrance and gratitude.

In accordance with the expressed wishes of his father, he was sent to Mohra Sharif for advanced spiritual training under the supervision of Hazrat Khwaja Nazir Ahmad Naqshbandi (RA), the son, disciple, and caliph of Hazrat Khwaja Muhammad Qasim Mohrawi (RA). There, he received rigorous and transformative training that combined disciplined spiritual exercises with deep intellectual engagement. This formative period proved profoundly illuminating, reshaping his entire being and enabling him to emerge as a living embodiment of spiritual grace and ethical excellence.

Upon completing his training, he returned to Zarhama and established himself at the central shrine, which functioned as a focal point of spiritual instruction and communal guidance. From this center, he initiated his mission of guiding seekers and serving society. His life exemplified the classical Sufi model of *suluk*, understood as a disciplined journey toward proximity to God, combined with an active responsibility to guide others along the path of righteousness. This journey was grounded in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the mercy for all, the infallible guide and universal exemplar.

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The Sufi path, as embodied in his life, emphasized virtues such as truthfulness, piety, patience, love, justice, ethical refinement, compassion, and self-sacrifice. It required the integration of spiritual awareness into all aspects of life, ensuring that every action contributed to the promotion of moral good and the elimination of injustice. In this framework, God constituted the ultimate objective of all human striving, and the individual was understood as a vicegerent entrusted with ethical responsibility in the world. Consequently, every dimension of life was to be shaped in accordance with divine values.

This spiritual journey, modeled upon the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, was regarded as an all-encompassing form of worship, extending beyond ritual practice to encompass all aspects of human existence. Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob Naqshbandi (RA) exemplified this ideal through a life characterized by continuous remembrance, simplicity, humility, and devotion. At the same time, he remained actively engaged in guiding others and addressing the needs of society. He travelled extensively across Kashmir, Punjab, and various regions of present-day Pakistan, disseminating a message grounded in divine unity, ethical conduct, and service to humanity.

During his travels, he emphasized the centrality of *Tawhid* (the unity of God), unconditional submission to divine will, and adherence to the Prophetic model as the basis for attaining ultimate success. Despite his deep immersion in spiritual contemplation, he remained fully conscious of his

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responsibilities as a guide within the Naqshbandi tradition. For him, spiritual enlightenment was inseparable from obedience to God and adherence to the Prophetic example. The true seeker on the path of *suluk* was, in his view, defined by complete servitude, expressed through submission to divine commands and conformity to the Sunnah.

He consistently advocated a life characterized by purity, truthfulness, remembrance of God, humility, patience, gratitude, love, and service. Such a life corresponding to the condition described in Islamic thought as that of the *siddiqun*, individuals distinguished by sincerity and truthfulness. His own life reflected this ideal, aligning him with the exemplary figures of the Sufi tradition who combined spiritual realization with ethical integrity.

His spiritual absorption did not lead him to withdrawal from social responsibilities. On the contrary, he maintained an active and balanced life, fulfilling his obligations within the framework of family and society. In accordance with Islamic teachings, he upheld marriage as an essential component of human life. Islamic tradition does not endorse celibacy as an ideal; rather, marriage is regarded as a normative practice that ensures social stability, ethical responsibility, and the continuation of human society. The Naqshbandi tradition, in particular, has consistently emphasized adherence to the Prophetic model in this regard, and thus does not promote monastic withdrawal.

The family of Hazrat Baba Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA) serves as a clear example of this integration of spiritual and

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social life, reflecting a tradition grounded in piety, ethical conduct, and communal responsibility. Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob Naqshbandi (RA) himself entered into two marriages within respected Naqshbandi lineages. His first wife was the daughter of Hazrat Pir Muhammad Yusuf Naqshbandi of Kals, Baramulla, and his second wife was the daughter of Hazrat Pir Abdul Aziz Naqshbandi of Ashmuqam.

From his first wife, he had three sons, Pir Muhammad Sharif, Pir Muhammad Rafiq, and Pir Muhammad Riyaz, and two daughters. From his second wife, he had four sons, Pir Muhammad Maqbool-ur-Rahman Naqshbandi, who currently serves as the spiritual successor and custodian of the shrine, Pir Mian Nasir Ahmad, Mian Aijaz Ahmad, and Mian Sharafat Ali, as well as two daughters.

Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob Naqshbandi (RA) passed away and was laid to rest within Darbar-e-Aaliya Younsia, Awoora, Kupwara, approximately three kilometers from the shrine of his revered father, Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Younis Naqshbandi (RA). His life and legacy continue to serve as a source of inspiration for those engaged in the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, ethical refinement, and service to humanity.

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Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Maqbool Naqshbandi (MZ)

The historical evolution of Sufi lineages in Kashmir, particularly within the Naqshbandi order, must be situated within a broader framework of socio-spiritual transformation, ecological embeddedness, and intergenerational transmission of religious authority. The life and formation of Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Maqbool Naqshbandi (MZ) represents a compelling instance of such continuity, wherein spiritual inheritance, pedagogical rigor, and environmental influences converge to produce a distinctive religious personality rooted simultaneously in inherited tradition and lived experiential realities. This synthesis reflects the enduring vitality of Sufi institutional structures in shaping both individual subjectivities and collective moral imaginaries.

The assignment of Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali (RA) to the Kupwara valley by his spiritual guide (Murshid) may be interpreted not merely as a geographical relocation but as a deliberate spiritual intervention aimed at cultivating religious consciousness in a peripheral yet receptive socio-cultural landscape. Kupwara, characterized by its breathtaking natural beauty and relative socio-economic marginalization, emerges as an ideal terrain for the implantation of Sufi praxis, wherein spiritual transformation is pursued through both environmental immersion and disciplined instruction. The inhabitants of this region, described as industrious, resilient, and imbued with latent spiritual potential, became the focus of a sustained effort

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to elevate moral awareness and religious understanding through the Naqshbandi tradition.

The ecological setting of Kupwara occupies a central analytical position in understanding the formation of spiritual subjectivity within this lineage. The vivid imagery of verdant landscapes, flowing streams, fragrant blossoms, and harmonious avian life is not merely descriptive but symbolically indicative of divine manifestation within the natural world. In Sufi epistemology, nature functions as a repository of divine signs (ayat), inviting contemplation and facilitating an experiential awareness of the Creator.

The environment thus becomes an active pedagogical agent, shaping both perception and disposition, and fostering a contemplative orientation toward existence, purpose, and transcendence. Within this spiritually charged environment, the Naqshbandi lineage associated with Hazrat Rajwali (RA) expanded and consolidated its presence. The genealogical continuity of this order is embodied in Pir Muhammad Maqbool Naqshbandi (MZ) (popularly known as Bajee Sahib), whose ancestry is traced to Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob Naqshbandi (RA), a towering figure in the Naqshbandi tradition of Kashmir. The institutional nucleus of this lineage, the Darbar-e-Aaliya Younusia Naqshbandia shrine at Awoora, in Kupwara, functions as both a symbolic center of spiritual authority and a practical site of communal engagement, ritual practice, and pedagogical dissemination.

The shrine, originally established by Hazrat Mawlana Pir Mian Muhammad Rajwali Naqshbandi (RA), the successor

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to Khwaja Nizamuddin Kiyanvi (RA), represents a layered history of spiritual transmission, institutional consolidation, and socio-religious influence. The intermarriage of Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob (RA) into esteemed Naqshbandi and Pakhtoon families further reinforced the socio-cultural legitimacy and continuity of the lineage, embedding it within broader networks of prestige and authority. Such alliances highlight the interplay between spiritual charisma and social structure, demonstrating how religious authority is both inherited and negotiated within specific historical contexts.

Born in 1970 into this distinguished spiritual family, Pir Mian Muhammad Maqbool Naqshbandi (MZ) inherited not only a genealogical legacy but also an environment structured by ethical discipline, intellectual engagement, and spiritual training. His mother, Mayie Hazrat Mahmooda Jan, the daughter of Hazrat Pir Abdul Aziz (RA), belonging to a revered Pakhtoon family spiritually associated with the Rishi saint Hazrat Zainuddin Wali (RA) of Ashmuqam, contributed significantly to the moral and spiritual ethos of the household. This convergence of Naqshbandi and Rishi influences exemplifies the syncretic yet doctrinally grounded character of Kashmiri Islam, wherein diverse spiritual traditions coexist within a shared framework of Islamic orthodoxy.

The early life of Pir Mian Muhammad Maqbool Nashbandi (MZ) may be analytically understood as a formative phase marked by immersion in a spiritually saturated domestic and communal environment. The household functioned as a primary site of instruction, where

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foundational religious knowledge was imparted under the guidance of his father, Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Yaqoob Naqshbandi (RA). Simultaneously, the khanqah environment exposed him to a constant flow of disciples, visitors, and seekers, thereby cultivating a sense of humility, responsibility, and receptivity. This dual exposure to structured learning and lived spirituality contributed to the holistic development of his personality.

From a psycho-spiritual perspective, this upbringing facilitated the harmonization of cognitive, emotional, and spiritual faculties. The interplay between affection, discipline, and communal interaction enabled the internalization of key Sufi values such as compassion, service, and self-restraint. The development of such qualities may be understood within the broader framework of Islamic ethical psychology, wherein the regulation of human faculties—anger (*ghadab*), desire (*shahwa*), and reason (*'aql*)—is essential for achieving moral equilibrium and spiritual fulfillment.

The geographical and environmental context further reinforced this process. The mountains, valleys, and secluded natural spaces of Kashmir have historically served as sites of spiritual retreat and contemplation, providing an ideal setting for introspection and self-discipline. Such environments are deeply embedded within Sufi traditions, where retreat (*khalwa*) and seclusion are regarded as essential practices for overcoming the lower self (*nafs*) and attaining higher states of consciousness.

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This paradigm is reflected in the training methodologies of various Sufi orders, including the Naqshbandiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Kubrawiyya, and Chishtiyya. These traditions emphasize rigorous discipline, control of base desires, and the transformation of the النفس امارة (commanding self) into the النفساللوامة (self-reproaching soul) and ultimately the النفس المطمئنة (tranquil soul). Such a structured spiritual psychology aims at the cultivation of moral integrity and metaphysical awareness, enabling the individual to transcend egocentric impulses and align with divine will.

Within the Naqshbandi Nizamiya sub-order, to which this lineage belongs, such training was institutionalized through the strategic placement of disciples in remote and challenging environments. These conditions fostered resilience, introspection, and a profound sense of connection with God, while simultaneously cultivating empathy and compassion toward all forms of creation. The emphasis on egalitarian ethics and the rejection of hierarchical notions of superiority further underscore the moral vision of this tradition, which seeks to establish a human community based on dignity, respect, and mutual care.

A critical dimension of this formation is the centrality of knowledge (*ilm*) as both a divine attribute and a means of spiritual realization. In Islamic epistemology, knowledge encompasses both exoteric (*zahir*) and esoteric (*batin*) dimensions, which are understood as complementary rather than contradictory. The outward understanding of religious texts facilitates inward realization, while experiential

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knowledge deepens intellectual comprehension. This integrated approach reflects the holistic nature of Islamic scholarship, wherein theology, law, and spirituality are interwoven.

The Prophet hood, culminating in Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as the Seal of Prophets, is the ultimate sources of knowledge and guidance. Sufi traditions view their spiritual insights as extensions of Prophetic light, mediated through disciplined adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Consequently, the mission of Sufism is conceptualized as the illumination of the heart and the removal of spiritual darkness, achieved through both intellectual study and practical application.

The educational trajectory of Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Maqbool Naqshbandi exemplifies this integrated approach. His early instruction under his father was supplemented by formal studies under distinguished scholars such as Hazrat Maulana Rahimullah (RA), who provided rigorous training in Qur'anic exegesis and Prophetic traditions. His engagement with Hazrat Mufti Israel (RA) further deepened his understanding of Tafsir, while his pursuit of advanced studies at Jamia Naeemia in Moradabad exposed him to a comprehensive curriculum encompassing Arabic language, Hadith, jurisprudence, and other Islamic sciences.

The intellectual mentorship of eminent scholars, particularly Muhaddith-e-Azam Hazrat Maulana Tareequllah (RA), played a decisive role in shaping his scholarly orientation and interpretive capacities. This phase of education

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not only enhanced his academic proficiency but also prepared him for his future role as a spiritual guide and community leader, capable of addressing both theological questions and social challenges.

Parallel to his formal education, Pir Mian Muhammad Maqbool was engaged in intensive spiritual practices, including periods of seclusion at significant Sufi centers such as the shrine of Hazrat Allama Syed Muhammad Naeemuddin Muradabadi (RA) and the mausoleum of Hazrat Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (RA). These experiences facilitated spiritual knowledge and experiences (gnosis), complementing his intellectual training and reinforcing his commitment to the Naqshbandi path.

His pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in 1997 represents a culminating moment in his spiritual journey, symbolising both fulfillment and renewal. Accompanied by Hazrat Pir Haroon ur Rasheed (RA), he underwent further spiritual training that expanded his horizons and deepened his connection to the broader Islamic spiritual tradition. Subsequent retreats and guidance under various spiritual authorities contributed to his formal authorisation (*ijazah*) and succession within the Naqshbandi order.

Following the demise of his father, Hazrat Pir Mian Muhammad Maqbool assumed the role of *sajjada nashin* of the Darbar-e-Aaliya Younusia Naqshbandia at Awoora, Zarhama, thereby inheriting both spiritual and institutional responsibilities. This transition marks the culmination of a long process of training, knowledge acquisition, and spiritual

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discipline, positioning him as a key figure within the contemporary Naqshbandi tradition in Kashmir.

In analytical terms, the life of Pir Mian Muhammad Maqbool Naqshbandi exemplifies the dynamic interplay between lineage, learning, environment, and spiritual practice in the formation of Sufi authority. His trajectory illustrates how traditional structures of transmission continue to function and adapt within modern contexts, maintaining continuity while responding to evolving socio-cultural realities.

Ultimately, this narrative underscores the significance of Sufism as a comprehensive system of human development, integrating ethical discipline, intellectual inquiry, and spiritual realization. The Naqshbandi tradition, as embodied in this lineage, offers a model of transformative engagement that transcends individual piety to encompass broader societal well-being. It emphasizes compassion, knowledge, and service to humanity as central principles, thereby contributing to the construction of a moral and spiritually conscious society grounded in both tradition and reflective practice.

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The Sufi Path

One of the primary attributes ascribed to God is absolute transcendence, often expressed through the concept of divine exaltation, which encompasses meanings such as glory, praiseworthiness, holiness, goodness, beauty, grandeur, perfection, purity, and absolute unity. This attribute cannot be ascribed to any created being, since all created entities are inherently dependent. Every created existence depends upon God as its creator, sustainer, and guide, and is further dependent upon other elements within the created order for its development and continuity. By contrast, God is entirely independent, free from all forms of necessity, limitation, and deficiency. He alone is the necessary existence, transcending all modes of comprehension, relation, and comparison.

As the source of all existence, God has created the human being as a vicegerent and endowed him with the necessary faculties of knowledge, power, moral capacity, and freedom. These faculties enable the human being to pursue proximity to God through conscious and complete submission. Such submission is realized through adherence to divine guidance as conveyed through Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Human perfection, therefore, lies in aligning oneself with the divine attributes reflected in human nature, and in cultivating purity of thought, intention, and action. Every moral value contributes to this process of perfection, as virtues represent reflections of divine attributes within the human sphere.

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Virtues may be approached from multiple analytical perspectives, including their classification according to type, function, and relational context. They may be understood in relation to worldly engagement, the present state of the heart, the unity of purpose, and the ultimate relationship between the human being and God. In a general sense, virtues can be divided into two principal categories: those that function primarily as means, such as repentance, piety, reverential awareness, contemplation, sincerity, and truthfulness; and those that function both as means and as ends, such as reliance upon God and gratitude. Each virtue develops through a dynamic process consisting of three stages: knowledge, internal state, and action.

Knowledge produces awareness of reality and engenders reverence toward God. This reverence gives rise to piety, patience, and repentance, which in turn facilitate concentration upon God. When the individual becomes absorbed in this orientation, sincerity and truthfulness emerge, leading to deeper knowledge and ultimately to love of God. This progression represents the culmination of spiritual perfection. Classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali (RA) distinguish between temporary states and enduring stations, identifying the difference between them as one of degree rather than essence. A transient condition may arise temporarily, whereas a stable state reflects a permanent transformation within the individual.

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The human soul possesses an inherent inclination toward perfection and therefore undergoes a continuous process of development, striving to overcome obstacles that hinder its progress. These obstacles may arise both internally, in the form of lower impulses, and externally, in the form of worldly distractions. Through sustained effort and self-discipline, the individual progresses through successive stages of moral and spiritual refinement, culminating in a state of tranquility and equilibrium.

The initial and essential step in this process is repentance, understood as an awakening of self-awareness and recognition of one's moral shortcomings and their consequences. Repentance initiates a transformative process through which negative tendencies are removed and replaced by virtues such as restraint, simplicity, and patience. Patience serves as the foundational element of this transformation; without it, the individual cannot sustain progress along the path of ethical and spiritual development.

This process of self-transformation is maintained through disciplined practices of introspection and self-regulation. These include continuous self-observation, critical self-evaluation (*Muhasabba wa Minaqabba*), corrective discipline (*Muaqabah*), sustained struggle against negative inclinations, and reflective self-reproach (*Mujahadah wa Muatabah*). The effectiveness of this process depends fundamentally upon sincerity of intention (*Niya*) and unity of

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purpose (*Ikhlas*).[7] Intention plays a decisive role in determining the moral quality of action, as actions derive their ethical value from the intention that underlies them.

Truthfulness in intention leads to clarity in resolve, and such clarity facilitates progress through successive stages of realization. However, complete realization is not attainable without the integration of reverence, love, and reliance upon God.

These qualities shape the future relationship between the human being and the Divine and emerge in proportion to one's knowledge of God. Those who attain the highest level of truthfulness (*Siddiqqun*) are characterized by complete submission, reliance, gratitude, and constant remembrance of God. All virtues and spiritual practices within the Sufi tradition are directed toward the purification of the heart and the refinement of action, guiding the seeker toward moral perfection and divine pleasure.

The analytical framework developed by Al-Ghazali (RA) provides a comprehensive understanding of this process, opening pathways toward ultimate fulfillment.[8]

This spiritual journey is grounded in both practical and experiential knowledge, leading to the purification of the self and culminating in the attainment of divine pleasure. As the

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[7] Ummar ud din, *The Ethical Philosophy of Al-Ghazali* (AMU, Aligarh)

[8] Al-Ghazali, *Ihya ul Ulum al-Din*, Urdu Trans. (Matba Tej Kishore Lucknow)

____. *Kimiya al-Sadat*, Urdu trans., Molvi Fakhruddin Ahmad (Matba Tej Kishore Lucknow)

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individual advances, every aspect of his life becomes integrated into a unified pattern of worship and remembrance. Continuous remembrance gradually removes all forms of inner darkness, enabling the individual to transcend attachment to all that is transient. In advanced stages, even awareness of the self may recede, a condition described in Sufi terminology as *fana*, or the effacement of the self.

Further progression leads to heightened awareness of deeper dimensions of reality, including insight into the nature of creation and existence. The individual moves from multiplicity toward unity, attaining an initial realization of divine oneness. At certain stages, this may involve an acute awareness of the divine presence, marking a transition toward higher forms of spiritual perception and understanding.

The illumination of soul leads him to the further glimpses of mysteries and understanding of the reality. But the final stage or the most advanced stage of the realization of the mysteries and the vision of God is not possible in this life. It is the second stage of life in the life hereafter, where he will realize the truth as it is, according to his spiritual level or capacities.

All forms of worship within the Islamic tradition are fundamentally oriented toward the remembrance of God. The declaration of faith, commonly expressed in the word *Kalima*, *"There is no god except God"*, constitutes the very essence and inner core of belief. All ritual practices and devotional acts may be understood as diverse modes through which this central affirmation is articulated and actualized. Continuous

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remembrance of God is not merely recommended but is explicitly commanded within the religious framework, forming a central axis of spiritual life.

The process of remembrance may be analytically described as unfolding through four progressive stages:

a) Remembrance of God through the tongue, involving verbal repetition and articulation of divine names and *Kalimas* (words).

b) Remembrance of God through the heart, in which the internal faculty of awareness becomes engaged in contemplative recollection.

c) Complete purification of the heart, accompanied by the effacement of all distractions, so that nothing remains present in consciousness except the remembrance of God.

d) A further stage in which even the awareness of remembrance itself is transcended, leaving only the presence of God in the consciousness of the seeker.

At this advanced stage, the traveller becomes oblivious to all phenomena and perceives only the Divine reality in all things. This condition is often described in mystical language as the perception that —all is He (*Hama Ost*), representing an initial culmination of the spiritual journey.

The final stage of this process is *fana*, understood as the complete effacement of the self, in which the individual loses awareness even of personal identity in the intensity of divine love.

The spiritual path consists of multiple stages, each

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characterized by distinct experiential meanings and transformations. Although outward practices may appear similar, their inner significance evolves as the traveller advances. This path is traditionally associated with the *awliya*, the friends of God, whose lives exemplify a mode of existence oriented toward transcendence and detachment.

Detachment from the world, as emphasized in Sufi teachings, does not imply a rejection of the physical world as such. Rather, the —worldl is defined as any thought, inclination, or action that distracts the individual from the ultimate reality. The material world, in itself, is regarded as a neutral instrument, a means through which human needs are fulfilled and spiritual objectives may be pursued. However, when it becomes an end in itself, it transforms into an obstacle that distances the individual from the remembrance of God. In response to this potential impediment, Sufis advocate a disciplined form of renunciation, often expressed through simplicity and voluntary poverty, as a means of safeguarding spiritual focus.

The entire structure of spiritual practice and discipline emerges from the foundational doctrine of Islam, namely *Tawhid*, the absolute unity of God. This principle extends beyond the mere acknowledgment of divine oneness to affirm that God is the only true and necessary existence, possessing absolute power, knowledge, and presence, and remaining entirely free from any form of duality or association. No linguistic expression or conceptual framework can fully encompass or adequately represent the Divine reality; only

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God possesses complete knowledge of His own essence.

This principle establishes a comprehensive ontological and cosmological framework that rejects all forms of meaninglessness and inauthenticity. Authentic meaning is located in complete submission to the Creator, who has endowed human beings with knowledge, freedom, power, and responsibility, and has appointed them as vicegerents within the created order. Human failure arises from the refusal to submit to divine guidance across all dimensions of life, as conveyed through the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who serves as the last bearer of the divine message, the authoritative interpreter and living embodiment of the divine message.

Within this perspective, all aspects of life are inherently spiritual, and no rigid separation exists between matter and spirit. Both are understood as manifestations of divine command, differing only in their modes of expression. Human agency, characterized by freedom, knowledge, and responsibility, generates the diverse forms through which life is organized and sustained.

When the human being recognizes the Prophet Muahammad ﷺ as the true representative of God and adopts his mode of life as a normative model, human existence attains its highest fulfillment as a form of devoted servitude. Every action is thereby transformed into an act of worship, embodying goodness, beauty, and moral strength, and ultimately leading to success in both temporal and eternal dimensions and worlds (*Sadat al-Ukhra*).

Spirituality, in this sense, is fundamentally constituted

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by action grounded in absolute submission to God and unconditional obedience, accompanied by love and reverence for the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Such obedience is expressed through multiple forms, the most central of which is remembrance of God. This remembrance is sustained by the purification of the heart, cultivated through both reverential fear and love of God, adherence to the Prophetic example, and service to creation.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ serves as the definitive model and criterion for all human action. Any practice that contradicts or negates the Prophetic example is regarded as a deviation from divine guidance. Islam, therefore, signifies submission to the will of God as conveyed, interpreted, and exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, whose life constitutes the ultimate standard for ethical and spiritual conduct.

Spirituality may thus be defined as the purification of the self and the complete embodiment of the fundamental declaration of faith: *"There is no god except God."* Sufi interpretation often extends this formulation by asserting that no true existence belongs to anything other than God, emphasizing the contingent nature of all created beings.

God alone possesses real, eternal existence, while all other forms of existence are temporal and derived. Within this framework, Sufism is understood as the path toward the realization of God through the purification of the soul. This process leads to continuous remembrance, simplicity, and ultimately to an awareness of both the absolute reality and the

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contingent nature of created existence. Such realization constitutes the essence of servitude, understood as complete submission to the Divine, who is absolutely pure and independent (*Subhan*).

Enlightenment, in this context, is synonymous with servitude. It entails an awakening that leads to a conscious connection with the ultimate source of light, namely God. This state is associated with the development of reason, cognition, sensibility, and knowledge, all of which serve as modalities of remembrance. These faculties shape the individual's engagement with the world and reflect the depth of faith, the understanding of religion, and the degree of spiritual refinement.

The individual's orientation toward the world reveals the level of purity of the heart and the nature of moral action. Those who truly love God adopt a disciplined approach to worldly life, treating it as a means rather than an end. They safeguard their hearts from influences that distract them from divine remembrance and cultivate a life of purity, devotion, and service.

The concept of remembrance, in its ordinary linguistic usage, refers to recalling persons, events, or ideas from the past, or maintaining an attitude of respect and regard toward someone or something. However, within a philosophical and spiritual framework, remembrance assumes a deeper meaning. It signifies the sustained awareness of the existence, attributes, and manifestations of God, leading to an experiential connection with the Divine.

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This form of remembrance represents a psychological and existential state characterized by detachment from temporal distractions and an orientation toward ultimate reality. It involves recitation of divine names, invocation at the beginning and end of actions, and continuous awareness during both activity and rest. Worship itself is understood as a form of remembrance, expressing acknowledgment of divine omnipresence.

Remembrance also encompasses several dimensions:

a) Maintaining a reverential awareness of God;
b) praising and glorifying God through verbal expression;
c) reciting the Qur'an; and
d) implementing its teachings as embodied in the life and example of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Accordingly, any action that conforms to these teachings constitutes a genuine act of remembrance.

In Sufi terminology, remembrance signifies both aspiration and attainment, since in the highest stages of spiritual realization these two aspects converge. Devotional exercises, often referred to as *dhikr*, involve the repeated invocation of divine names and attributes as found in the Qur'an.

The Qur'an itself presents remembrance as an all-encompassing process of knowledge, guidance, and wisdom leading to ultimate success.

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This concept may be understood through several principal modes:

1) remembrance as the Qur'an itself;
2) remembrance as divine communication to humanity and other beings;
3) remembrance as direct invocation of God;
4) remembrance as moral exhortation;
5) remembrance as formal prayer and communal address;
6) remembrance as the complete submission to divine lordship, mercy, and wisdom, expressed through the declaration of faith.

The most fundamental and authoritative expression of remembrance is the declaration—There is no God except God. This affirmation constitutes the foundation of faith and the highest form of submission. Its authenticity requires humility, sincerity, and complete acknowledgment of God as the sole necessary existence, without any partner in essence, attributes, or authority. God is the creator, sustainer, and sovereign of all that exists. True remembrance, therefore, is the unconditional affirmation of divine lordship. Any form of association or attribution of power to entities other than God constitutes a deviation from this principle. In contrast, sincere submission engenders peace, tranquility, and success in all dimensions of life, both in the present world and in the life to come.

Remembrance directs the fullest attention of the human being toward the Lord. It does not constitute a merely formal or outward submission; rather, it represents a comprehensive submission in both letter and spirit, characterized by the

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deliberate abandonment of all that is transient and the exclusive orientation of consciousness toward the Real, Living, and Eternal. This affirmation opens the path ways to peace, grace, and ultimate success. It purifies the heart and the totality of human existence from impurity, distraction, and moral darkness, thereby enabling the individual to attain a state of inner clarity and spiritual coherence.

God softens the hearts of those who engage in remembrance, and those whose hearts are thus softened receive illumination and tranquility. Their inner being becomes filled with certainty, and doubt is gradually removed from both thought and perception. Such individuals align their lives with the will of God, and their purified hearts become receptacles of truth and divine guidance. They approach the revealed text and the Prophetic tradition with attentiveness and receptivity, internalizing their meanings and embodying them in their conduct. Their lives, therefore, become a living expression of revealed wisdom.

The Qur'an is the Word of God, the ultimate source of guidance and mercy. Each of its verses is revealed, pure, authentic, and endowed with a universal relevance that transcends temporal and spatial limitations. It is preserved in its original form by divine will, safeguarded within the primordial register. It was revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the final messenger and the culmination of the Prophetic tradition. He is considered the living embodiment of the Qur'an, and his speech and actions are understood to be guided by divine instruction. Consequently, remembrance of

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the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is intrinsically linked to remembrance of God, as he is the bearer and interpreter of the divine message. The preservation of the Qur'an is thus inseparable from the preservation of the Prophetic model, and the continuity of this guidance remains central to the spiritual life of the community.

Remembrance of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ entails complete adherence to his normative example, as well as the continuous invocation of blessings and salutations upon him, in accordance with divine command. Similarly, remembrance of the Qur'an involves not only its recitation but also its comprehension, interpretation, and practical implementation in daily life. Since the Qur'an is the word of God, engagement with it in all these dimensions constitutes a direct form of remembrance of the Divine.

God is identified as the ultimate truth, while all other forms of truth remain relative and contingent. What is affirmed by God is regarded as authentic and valid. Those who receive divine guidance and conform their lives accordingly are described as truthful. Among them, the prophets occupy the highest rank, and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as the final messenger, represents the most complete embodiment of truth. He is described as possessing the highest moral character and as serving as the perfect model for human conduct, as well as a source of mercy for all existence.

The Qur'an, as the final revealed text, is characterized by completeness, authenticity, rational coherence, and profound wisdom. It serves as a comprehensive guide for

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those who cultivate self-restraint and consciousness of God. It presents both the revealed text and the Prophetic example as sources of illumination, clarity, and moral discernment, functioning as a criterion for distinguishing between good and evil. It is described as a consistent and internally coherent text, rich in blessings and guidance.

Those who engage with the Qur'an through recitation, regular prayer, and charitable expenditure are described as individuals of faith and wisdom. Their generosity and moral conduct represent forms of remembrance, expressed through acts of charity and gratitude. To live in accordance with divine guidance is itself the highest form of remembrance (*Ahl al-Zikr*). Such individuals are referred to as those who possess remembrance, as they internalize and embody the message of revelation and the Prophetic tradition.

The Qur'an also functions as a source of moral exhortation for those who seek to understand reality and align their lives with divine guidance, there by attaining ultimate success. It presents itself as a text containing fundamental principles and clear meanings, as a source of blessing, and as a guidance made accessible for remembrance.[9] These characteristics emphasize its role as a comprehensive framework for spiritual and ethical development.

Among all forms of remembrance, prayer occupies the most central and elevated position. It constitutes a fundamental obligation and serves as a defining marker

[9] Yusuf Ali, *The Glorious Qur'an*, Q. 31: 2, 11: 91, 54: 22

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distinguishing belief from disbelief. Prayer represents the most explicit expression of obedience to God, and its neglect signifies a rupture in the relationship between the human being and the Divine. The connection with God, which forms the basis of spiritual elevation, cannot be realized without prayer. It is both the outcome of self-knowledge and the means of sustaining awareness of God.

The concept of prayer encompasses multiple dimensions, including praise, reverence, purification, repentance, and the invocation of mercy. Its meanings vary depending on the context in which it is applied: when attributed to God, it signifies mercy; when associated with human beings, it involves acts such as bowing and prostration; and when applied to other elements of creation, it signifies their praise of the Creator. In all cases, it reflects submission to God and gratitude for divine beneficence, leading ultimately to success and the attainment of divine pleasure.

In its essential meaning, prayer represents reverence and submission directed exclusively toward God. It affirms that no other being possesses independent existence or is worthy of worship. Classical scholars have identified its dual function as invocation and worship, emphasizing its centrality within the structure of faith. Indeed, the entire religious system may be understood as a pattern of action aligned with divine will, and prayer is regarded as the most profound and comprehensive expression of this alignment.

The structure of prayer embodies submission through a sequence of prescribed actions: standing in attentive presence,

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orienting oneself toward the sacred direction, bowing, prostrating, and sitting for recitation. These movements symbolize the complete submission of the individual before God and constitute a central pillar of religious practice. When performed with sincerity and awareness, prayer transforms the human personality, aligning it with the ethical and spiritual principles of the religious worldview.

Fundamentally, prayer is both an act of submission and a form of dialogue with God, conducted in a state of physical, mental, and spiritual purity. It begins with purification and culminates in a heightened state of inner clarity. The essential conditions of prayer include the purity of the body, clothing, and place of worship; appropriate dress; orientation toward the sacred direction; intention; and the invocation of divine greatness. While these conditions are external, they serve as preparatory stages for inner transformation and spiritual growth.

These external requirements are intrinsically connected to internal conditions. The purity of the self is closely linked to the purity of one's sustenance, clothing, and environment, all of which must be acquired through lawful means. If these conditions are not fulfilled, the spiritual efficacy of prayer is compromised. Thus, the integrity of worship depends upon both external conformity and internal sincerity, and their integration is essential for achieving success in both worldly and transcendent dimensions of existence.

All the prescribed movements, postures, and recitations within prayer function as integrated expressions of reverence

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and remembrance of God. The recitation of the Qur'an, understood as the divine word, establishes a direct connection between the human being and the Divine.

The Qur'an itself affirms this relationship in the following terms:

—These are verses of the Wise Book,
A guide and a mercy for those who do good, Those who establish regular prayer,
Give regular charity,
And have certainty regarding the life to come".[10]

Similarly, it declares:

—Those who recite the Book of God, establish prayer, And spend out of what We have provided for them".[11]

Prayer, therefore, constitutes both remembrance of God and a natural expression of gratitude for divine beneficence and blessings. When performed regularly and in accordance with its essential conditions, it contributes to the eradication of moral corruption and wrongdoing, while reinforcing remembrance in those who remain conscious of their Lord.

Patience emerges as a fundamental prerequisite for effective remembrance, sustained prayer, and righteous action. Remembrance, prayer, and ethical conduct together encompass the domains of thought, speech, and action. Patience, in this context, signifies steadfastness of purpose, disciplined engagement, and a composed acceptance of divine

[10] Qur'an 31: 1–4
[11] Qur'an 35: 29

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will. Within the Sufi understanding, it further implies a refined inner disposition that integrates endurance with insight. This disposition, in turn, cultivates purity of both body and self, thereby facilitating the realization of and relationship with God.

Purity itself is rooted in both reverential awareness of God and love for Him. The act of prostration, in its fullest meaning, embodies this dual dimension of reverence and love. Those who combine these qualities are described as individuals who safeguard the sanctity of their worship. The subjugation of the lower self constitutes a primary condition for genuine remembrance. Without the purification of the heart, neither the recognition nor the love of God can be fully realized. The individual who preserves prayer in its true spirit attains both ethical refinement and spiritual elevation. The Qur'an emphasizes this principle:

> *"Seek help through patience and prayer; Indeed, it is difficult except for those who are humble, Those who are certain that they will meet their Lord And that they will return to Him".*[12]

The purification of the heart, combined with steadfast and sincere engagement in prayer and remembrance, generates divine pleasure and eliminates moral corruption. The Qur'an refers to this transformation by indicating that prayer restrains from shameful (*Fahasha*) and unjust actions (*Munkar*). Such

[12] Qur'an 2: 45–46

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actions encompass all forms of moral deviation, including obscenity, injustice, selfishness, and the refusal to act charitably. In a broader sense, these terms include all forms of conduct that contradict divine guidance and ethical integrity.

Prayer and remembrance, when practiced authentically, elevate the individual to higher levels of social, ethical, cultural, and spiritual development, ultimately leading to success in both worldly and transcendent dimensions. For this reason, prayer is regarded as a central form of remembrance and a means of spiritual ascent. It strengthens the individual and establishes a direct relationship with the Creator.

Conversely, neglect of prayer leads to spiritual decline, as indicated in the Qur'anic depiction of those who are questioned about their failure:

"What led you into the Fire? They will say: We were not among those who prayed".[13]

Thus, prayer is understood as a principal means of salvation from divine accountability. The spirit of prayer also encompasses unity, fostering a collective sense of faith and contributing to the construction of a morally and spiritually integrated society. It functions as the foundation of social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life, reflecting the central doctrine of the unity and equality of humankind. The predominantly congregational nature of obligatory prayers reinforces communal cohesion, while voluntary prayers may be performed individually. In its various forms, ritual prayer,

[13] Qur'an 74: 42–43

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charitable obligation, fasting, and pilgrimage, the religious system expresses a unified structure grounded in the oneness of God and the equality of human beings as His vicegerents.

This system of worship is inherently spiritual and demands both individual and collective purity. The purification of the heart and of society establishes the connection between humanity and God, and every manifestation of this purity constitutes an act of remembrance. It eliminates all forms of unjust hierarchy based on wealth, race, language, or social status. The Qur'an explicitly affirms this principle:

> *"O humankind, We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honored of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. God is all-knowing and fully aware".*[14]

Through this declaration, the Qur'an dismantles all artificial constructs of superiority and establishes a universal framework of moral equality.

The external conditions of prayer include ablution, cleanliness, purity of body and clothing, appropriate orientation toward the sacred direction, and adherence to prescribed forms. The internal or esoteric conditions include purity of intention, focused attention toward God, detachment from distractions, humility, and submission. The postures of

[14] Qur'an 49: 13

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bowing and prostration symbolize repentance, humility, and complete submission.

The mosque functions as the central institution of spiritual life, serving as a space for worship, remembrance, knowledge, guidance, and communal unity. The foremost mosque is the Kaaba, regarded as the primary center of worship. This is followed by the mosque established by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in Medina, and the mosque in Jerusalem, both of which hold significant spiritual importance within the Islamic tradition. These institutions collectively represent focal points of spiritual orientation and communal identity.

Prayer is described in Prophetic tradition as a means of spiritual elevation. The Kaaba serves as the central axis of this orientation, symbolizing unity in worship across the global community. Congregational prayers, particularly those performed on Fridays and during two major religious festivals (*Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Zuha*) embody the collective dimension of worship. Even funeral rites express communal solidarity and submission to divine will.

The sermon delivered during congregational prayer functions as an instrument of guidance, instruction, and social direction. It encompasses three primary dimensions: devotion and submission to God, the invocation of blessings upon the Prophet Muhmmad ﷺ, and the provision of guidance to the community in matters of ethical and social significance. The Qur'an enjoins believers to invoke blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ : *"O you who believe, send blessings upon Him and greet*

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Him with respect".[15]

Prayer, therefore, encompasses all dimensions of life when understood within the framework of divine guidance. It integrates spiritual, ethical, and social practices into a unified system directed toward the attainment of both worldly well-being and ultimate success (*Sadat al-Ukhrawi*).

Within the Sufi tradition, the role of the spiritual guide and the Khanqah (spiritual lodge) embody the practical realization of these principles. The guide directs seekers along the path of spiritual discipline, while the Khanqah functions as a center for instruction, remembrance, and human service. These institutions facilitate the cultivation of purity, knowledge, and ethical conduct, and they transmit the teachings of the Prophet and the spiritual lineage.

The spiritual guide assumes multiple roles as teacher, mentor, and caretaker, maintaining close oversight of the progress of seekers and assisting them in overcoming obstacles. Through this guidance, individuals are enabled to advance toward the attainment of divine pleasure and the realization of their spiritual potential.

Poverty, in its ordinary and socio-economic sense, refers to the absence or insufficiency of resources necessary for sustaining a dignified human life. Such a condition, when it entails deprivation of basic needs, is not endorsed within the Islamic world view, which emphasizes balance, responsibility, and the preservation of human dignity. Extreme material

[15] Qur'an 33: 56

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deprivation may, under certain circumstances, lead to moral vulnerability, spiritual neglect, or even ingratitude toward divine beneficence. For this reason, the pursuit of lawful means of sustenance is considered an essential component of religious life.

Material resources are necessary for the orderly functioning of individual and collective existence. The performance of acts of worship, including prayer and charity, often presupposes a minimum level of material stability. Excessive hardship arising from involuntary poverty may hinder the cultivation of virtue, disrupt social equilibrium, and impede the consistent remembrance and worship of God. The Prophetic tradition, associated with Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, reflects a concern for alleviating such hardship and discourages conditions that undermine both spiritual and social well-being.

Within the Sufi tradition, however, the concept of poverty assumes a distinct and more nuanced meaning. It does not signify helplessness or enforced deprivation; rather, it denotes a consciously adopted ethical and spiritual orientation. This form of poverty is characterized by voluntary simplicity and detachment from excess, undertaken for the sake of attaining closeness to God. The individual who adopts this path renounces attachment to material luxury, not by rejecting the world entirely, but by subordinating it to higher spiritual aims. Wealth, in this framework, is not accumulated for self-indulgence but is utilized in the service of others, including the poor, the vulnerable, and travellers in need.

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Such a person lives with moderation, retaining only what is necessary for sustaining life and fulfilling obligations, while directing surplus resources toward charitable and socially beneficial purposes. This voluntary simplicity becomes a source of inner contentment rather than deprivation. The individual develops a state of independence from material attachments, such that neither acquisition nor loss of worldly goods produces excessive emotional fluctuation. This condition reflects an alignment with divine attributes of sufficiency and self-subsistence, enabling the individual to maintain proximity to the Divine by minimizing distractions associated with material preoccupation.

Detachment, in this sense, extends beyond physical possessions to include psychological attachment to wealth, status, and luxury. These attachments may function as barriers that obscure awareness of God. The Sufi discipline therefore seeks to remove not only external excess but also internal dependence upon such forms of attachment. However, this approach does not entail a categorical rejection of the world. Absolute hostility toward worldly existence is neither prescribed nor considered a valid spiritual path. Rather, a balanced detachment is advocated, in which the world is engaged responsibly while remaining subordinate to spiritual objectives.

The Sufi path recognizes multiple stages of development, each characterized by distinct disciplines and requirements. Practices appropriate at one stage may be inappropriate at another, reflecting the individualized nature of

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spiritual progression. In some contexts, material resources may facilitate spiritual growth and social service, while in others, detachment from them may be necessary. Thus, no single approach to wealth or poverty is universally applicable; rather, each condition is evaluated in relation to the spiritual state and needs of the individual.

Sufis do not reject wealth or material existence in themselves; instead, they interpret them as instruments to be used in the service of higher purposes. Wealth is regarded as a means for achieving divine grace through acts of generosity, social responsibility, and ethical conduct. Historically, Sufi figures have been actively engaged in providing assistance to the poor, offering shelter, food, clothing, and education, and contributing to the moral and social development of communities. Their engagement reflects a commitment to both spiritual realization and social welfare.

The Sufi ethos also includes the willingness to endure hardship and personal sacrifice for the benefit of others. This orientation is grounded in qualities such as purity, self-discipline, moral integrity, courage, patience, and contentment. These virtues are cultivated through sustained spiritual practice and ethical engagement, forming the foundation of a life oriented toward divine remembrance.

Ultimately, this conception of poverty represents a mode of complete submission to God, expressed through love for the Divine and compassionate service to creation. The highest expression of this love and service is the effort to guide individuals away from moral and spiritual decline and toward

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a life aligned with divine guidance. Such a transformation is understood to be attainable only through adherence to the model established by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who is regarded as a universal exemplar of mercy and guidance. Within this framework, the Sufis are seen as devoted adherents to this model, embodying its principles through both inner discipline and outward service.

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